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FRANK MILLER'S SIN CITY® VOLUME 7: HELL AND BACK
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This volume collects issues one through nine of the Dark Horse comic book series *Sin City: Hell and Back*.

Hell and Back ***FRANK MILLER***

DARK HORSE BOOKS®

IT'S ONE OF THOSE CLEAR, COOL NIGHTS THAT DROPS INTO THE MIDDLE OF SUMMER LIKE A GIFT FROM ON HIGH. THE SHORT HAIRS ON YOUR ARMS CARRY AN ELECTRIC TINGLE, TEASING, HINTING AT A COMING STORM.
THE WIND RISES IN WILD GUSTS, RATTLING WINDOWS, FORCING HOT DOG VENDORS TO WRESTLE WITH THE UMBRELLAS ON THEIR CARTS, RIPPING DRIED TREE BRANCHES FREE AND SCATTERING THEM LIKE OLD BONES.
IT'S NO KIND OF NIGHT TO STAY IN THE CITY.
IT'S NO KIND OF NIGHT TO STAY INSIDE ANYTHING.

A FEW MILES OUT MY NECK UNKINKS AND MY SHOULDER SHIFTS, SETTLING MORE COMFORTABLY IN ITS SOCKET. THE BEES IN MY HEAD QUIET DOWN.
IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY *RENT*, I WOULDN'T HAVE A CARE IN THE *WORLD*.
NOBODY TO BLAME BUT MYSELF. I KNEW WHAT SORT OF CLIENT I WAS DEALING WITH.
FOR A FULL MINUTE PURVIS SHOOK HIS HEAD AND SHOOK HIS HEAD AND SHOOK HIS HEAD...
...THEN HE LET OUT WITH A LITTLE-BOY *WHIMPER*...

YOU PUT A SHEET ON HER.
I HATE TO BE THE ONE TO TELL YOU THIS, KID--IT'S A TERRIBLE THING TO SAY ABOUT A GUY--BUT YOU ARE NOT A TEAM PLAYER.
HERE I SEND YOU BIBI--A PANTS-EXPLODER LIKE BIBI --AND YOU DROP A SHEET ON HER. JESUS. WHY DIDN'T YOU GO WHOLE HOG AND PUT A BAG ON HER HEAD?
I SHOULD'VE SMELLED TROUBLE COMING WHEN SHE TOLD ME YOU DIDN'T EVEN MAKE A PASS AT HER.
DON'T GET ME WRONG. IT'S A PRETTY SHEET. BUT MY MAGAZINE AIN'T IN THE BUSINESS OF SELLING SHEETS. OR BUYING THEM, EITHER. IF IT DON'T GIVE ME A STIFFY, I DON'T BUY IT!
I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT.
I WANT WHAT I WANT!
YEAH.

OH, BABY! INSTANT STIFFY!
YOU'RE A GENIUS, KID!
"GENIUS." DIDN'T THAT WORD MEAN SOMETHING ONCE?
THE FUNNY THING IS, THAT ONE HAD BEEN A WHOLE LOT EASIER TO PAINT THAN THE ONE WITH THE SHEET.
IT WAS EASY.
I'D FINALLY MADE THE GRADE.
I'D FINALLY PROVEN I WAS A TEAM PLAYER.

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO LAUGH OR CURSE MYSELF. SO I DO A LITTLE OF BOTH.
THE CHECK WAS ALMOST IN MY HANDS.
MY RENT WAS AS GOOD AS PAID.
LORD ONLY KNOWS WHAT GOT INTO ME.
GARKK!
I HADN'T PLANNED ON DOING ANYTHING STUPID. MY HANDS MOVED ALL ON THEIR OWN.
NUTS. IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD. THERE'LL BE OTHER CHANCES
YOU SON OF A BITCH!
NOT WITH PURVIS--
--BUT THERE'LL BE OTHER CHANCES.
IN THE MEANTIME, LANGER'S WILL PROBABLY TAKE ME BACK I'M A DECENT ENOUGH SHORT-ORDER COOK.
IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD.

FAPP
FAPP
FAPP
FAPP
FAPP

FAPP
SCREECH

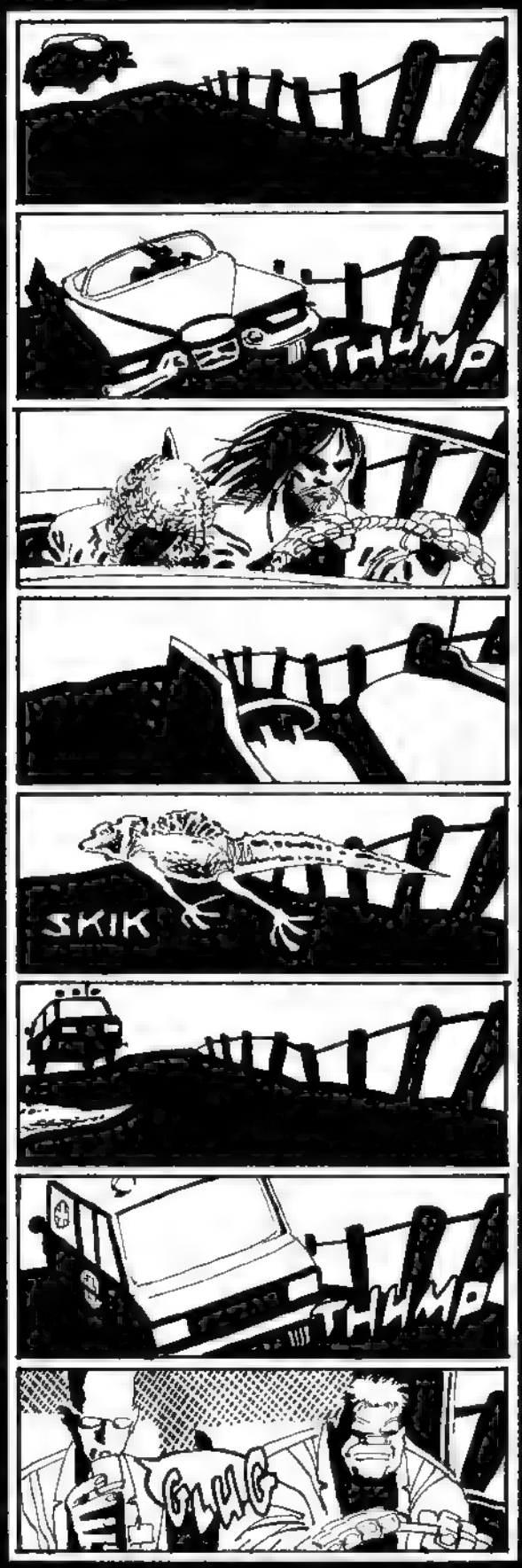
EXCUSE ME, MA'AM YOU DROPPED YOUR JACKET.
IT'S GOT YOUR WALLET IN IT.

NO!
DAMN IT, NO!

SHE'S A LITTLE HEAVIER THAN SHE LOOKS.
STRONG BODY
SHE'S NOT BREATHING.
STRONG BODY SHE'S IN GOOD SHAPE.
SHE CAN MAKE IT.
COME ON, WOMAN.
BREATHE.

KOFF
HNH?
RELAX DON'T TRY TO GET UP I'LL CARRY YOU
SHE SLEEPS
BREATHING STEADILY NOW.
SHE'S OUT OF DANGER.

SHE'S ALIVE. BUT SHE'S NOT ALONE.
AND SHE'S SUICIDAL. A DAMN JUMPER. THAT WASN'T IN HER FILE. THERE WASN'T A CLUE. DAMN IT WE ALMOST LOST HER DAMN IT. THERE WASN'T A CLUE.
QUIT YOUR WHINING.
WE MUST TAKE THE INITIATIVE-- TEND TO HER BEFORE SHE FINDS ANOTHER HIGH PLACE--OR DEVELOPS ANY ROMANTIC ENTANGLEMENT WITH HER GOOD SAMARITAN.
SHE'S GOTTA BE ALONE. THAT'S THE RULES.
WATCH YOUR GRAMMAR, DOCTOR FREDRIC--AND DO AS YOU'RE TOLD. I'LL MAKE CERTAIN SHE'S ALONE--ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.
WE MAKE OUR MOVE TONIGHT.
WE GOTTA WAIT AS LONG AS WE CAN.
WE DON'T WANNA GET ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE COLONEL.


THUMP
SKIK
THUMP
GLUG

...SHE SLIPPED OFF A CLIFF, INTO THE BAY.
SHAKING LIKE A LEAF, THE POOR DEAR. HYPOTHERMIA, FROM THE LOOK OF HER
GET HER IN HERE, BOY!
MRS MENDOZA IS MY LAND-LADY. SHE'S A RETIRED NURSE. SHE'S ALSO A SWEETHEART. SHE DOESN'T EVEN MENTION THE RENT.
HERE, DARLING. LET'S GET YOU OUT OF THESE WET CLOTHES AND INTO A NICE, WARM BATH.
SHE'S QUITE THE BEAUTY, WALLACE. AND I'LL BET YOU A NICKEL TO A DOUGHNUT SHE'LL BE RIGHT GRATEFUL FOR WHAT YOU DONE.
ALL I M SAYING IS IT WOULDN'T KILL YOU TO ASK HER FOR HER PHONE NUMBER.

I HEAD ON UP TO MY LOFT. I TRY TO GET SOME WORK DONE.
FORGET IT
TOO RESTLESS.
THAK
THOK
KREEK

THANK YOU.
SURE. I JUST DID WHAT ANY BODY- WHERE YOU GOING?
I FIGURE I'VE CAUSED PLENTY ENOUGH TROUBLE
YOU CAN'T HIT THE STREET DRESSED LIKE THAT.
IT'S ALL YOUR LANDLADY HAD THAT DIDN'T SLIDE RIGHT OFF ME.
LOOK THROUGH MY STUFF. THERE'S BOUND TO BE SOMETHING YOU CAN WEAR. THEN I'LL GIVE YOU A RIDE HOME
THANKS AGAIN. I'LL JUST BE A SECOND.

JUST A SECOND!
SHE MAY NOT CARE ABOUT STAYING ALIVE--
--BUT SHE SURE CARES HOW SHE LOOKS.
I'LL BE JUST A SECOND!
NO. NO. THIS WON'T DO EITHER. NOT EVEN CLOSE.
LET'S SEE WHAT ELSE HE'S GOT...

CAN I BUY YOU A DRINK? PLEASE. IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO
SOUNDS GOOD.
SAY--THIS IS A GREAT PLACE YOU'VE GOT HERE...
...!
DAMN!
IS THIS YOURS? I MEAN, DID YOU PAINT IT?
IT'S NOT FINISHED
"WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU GOT TO SHOW ME?" SHE ASKS.
MUSIC TO MY EARS.
EVERYTHING SHE SAYS IS MUSIC TO MY EARS
SHE LINGERS ON EVERY PIECE
SHE ASKS ALL THE RIGHT QUESTIONS
SHE'S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.

LOOK AT THE TIME! STILL UP FOR THAT DRINK?
SURE LOVE TO LET'S GO.
HER NAME'S ESTHER. SHE'S AN ACTRESS WHO'S ENJOYED ABOUT AS MUCH PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS AS I HAVE--AND WITH ABOUT THE SAME QUALITY OF CLIENTS.
IT'S THIS ROTTEN TOWN IT SOILS EVERYBODY IN IT.
NO, IT'S NOT THE PARTS THEY OFFER. I'M HARDLY IN ANY POSITION TO PICK AND CHOOSE. IT'S THAT THE ONLY ROUTE TO THE SOUND STAGE INCLUDES A STOP ON THE COUCH, IF YOU CATCH MY DRIFT
SO, SOLDIER-- HOW ABOUT YOU TELL ME A WAR STORY?
WHAT, ARE YOU PSYCHIC?
THANKS, DARRYL YOU'RE A PRINCE. BUY ME A DRINK, WILL YOU?
NOT PSYCHIC. JUST NOSY. I SNEAKED A LOOK AT YOUR MEDAL.
SORRY
THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR. YOU DON'T GET ONE OF THOSE FOR JUST SHOWING UP.
WHAT D YOU DO?
THAT'S A LONG STORY
I'VE GOT ALL NIGHT.

I TELL HER WHAT HAPPENED. THE SHORT VERSION
ALL BY YOURSELF? THAT'S AMAZING!
IT WASN'T THAT BIG A DEAL I JUST HAPPENED TO BE THERE. ANYBODY ELSE WOULD'VE DONE THE SAME.
SURE FELT GOOD TO GET BACK TO THE STATES, THOUGH
...FILED FOR DIVORCE. THE BUM. EVEN TRIED TO GET CUSTODY OF MY BOY. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?
PEGGY, I SWEAR TO YOU - IF I COULD GET MY HANDS ON THAT CREEP I'D BREAK HIM IN HALF!
9
I'D DO ANYTHING FOR YOU, PEGGY YOU KNOW I'VE ALWAYS HAD A THING FOR YOU.
BUY ME ANOTHER DRINK.
ESTHER-- IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS, BUT...
WHY DID I JUMP? AW LET'S NOT SPOIL THINGS WITH THAT. NOT JUST NOW, OKAY? LET'S JUST SAY YOU SAVED ME FROM MAKING A BIG MISTAKE
AND LET'S TAKE A WALK THOSE TWO ARE MAKING ME SICK

FUPP

ON YOUR
LONGHAIR!

HNH?
ESTHER?
THAT'S NOT MY NAME
KRAK

HARSH
42
WISEASS JUNKIE. DESERVES WORSE.
CALLIN' ME BY A GIRLY NAME...
SNAP
CHUNK
WELL, HELL, MANSON. TIME WAS...
I AIN'T BEEN A WOMAN FOR NINE YEARS.
THE WORLD'S SEEN NASTIER COPS THAN THE ONES YOU'LL MEET IN BASIN CITY.
LIKE THOSE GUYS WHO WORKED FOR STALIN.
ESTHER.
ESTHER.
ESTHER. WHAT HAPPENED?

AARR
CANDYASS LONGHAIR JUNKIE FAGGOT. GIVE ME SOME TROUBLE. RESIST ARREST.
COME ON. I'M DARING YOU I'M BEGGING YOU.
SORRY ABOUT MY PARTNER, STRANGER. HE'S NOT HIMSELF.
IT'S HIS MARRIAGE. HE'S GOING THROUGH A VERY ROUGH PATCH. WE'RE ALL QUITE WORRIED ABOUT HIM
SHUT YOUR TRAP, BUNDY
STAY CALM.
REMEMBER

PUNT
LIKE THAT, JUNKIE-BOY?
GYAA
STAY CALM.
STAY CALM
STAY CALM
CHINK!
WAIT
REMEMBER
A SOFT VOICE, SMOOTH AS SYRUP:
DON'T FIGHT ME DON'T FIGHT ME. I WON'T HURT YOU

A SECOND VOICE—THIS ONE SHRILL, JITTERY, JAGGED AS SHATTERING GLASS=
DON'T DAMAGE HER DAMN IT DON'T DAMAGE HER
REGAIN YOUR COMPOSURE, DOCTOR FREDRIC--AND QUIT YOUR WHINING.
I WON'T LEAVE A BRUISE. I NEVER DO.
ESTHER.
SHE STRUGGLED.
SHE KICKED.
ESTHER.
ESTHER. I COULDN'T STAND UP.
I COULDN'T MOVE MY ARMS.
I COULDN'T MOVE A MUSCLE.
I WAS RIGHT THERE AND I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING.
ESTHER. I COULDN'T MOVE A MUSCLE.
I COULDN'T LIFT MY ARMS.
WHY COULDN'T I MOVE?
TOK

ESTHER. WHAT HAPPENED?
NOT TO SOUND LIKE A LIBERAL OR ANYTHING, MANSON, BUT YOU COULD'VE ASKED THE MAN HOW HE WOUND UP BACK THERE.
HE JUST MIGHT HAVE BEEN MUGGED.
MUGGED, MY BUTT. LOOK AT HIS EYES. PUPILS DILATED WIDE AS SAUCERS.
HE'S STONED OUT OF HIS MIND.
42
POLICE
A NIGHT IN THE TANK OUGHTA TEACH HIM TO FILL HIS ARM ON SOMEBODY ELSE'S BEAT.
STONED. DRUGGED.
I'VE BEEN DRUGGED.
ESTHER. WHAT HAPPENED?
DON'T FRET. YOU'RE SAFE WITH US. YOU'RE PRECIOUS TO US.
AND YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS. GOOD HANDS.

I'M A QUALIFIED PHYSICIAN. I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING.
THIS'LL STING A LITTLE BIT BUT YOU'LL WAKE UP FEELING JUST FINE.
DON T THRASH. DAMN IT DON'T THRASH.
STEADY YOURSELF, DOCTOR FREDRIC.
BE CAREFUL WITH THE MERCHANDISE.

DON'T POUT, CHICKLET I TOLD YOU COPS ARE LOUSY TIPPERS.
CHEAP BASTARDS IS WHAT THEY ARE!
BASIN CITY'S FINEST
THEY SHOVE ME AROUND. THEY SLAP ME AROUND THEY STRIP-SEARCH ME
AT LEAST THEY DON'T CHARGE ME WITH ANYTHING
THEY DON'T HAVE TO.

NOT WHEN THEY CAN SPARE THEMSELVES THE PAPERWORK BY SIMPLY TOSSING ME IN THE TANK.
TOK TOK TOK TOK TOK
I DON'T REMEMBER TELLING YOU TO STOP WALKING, PECKER-WOOD.
I'M JUST TRYING TO BE ACCOMMO-DATING, OFFICER
KLIK KLAK SNAP
I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT THESE BACK.
CHINK CHING
HUKK HUKK
BLAGG
WORMS. IN MY INTESTINES. EATING ME UP FROM INSIDE.
PUNK
OOF!
SLEEP TIGHT, HOUDINI

HUKK HUKK
BLAGG
HUKK
BEETLES. IN MY HEAD. IN MY BRAIN. INSIDE MY BRAIN. EATING MY BRAIN. I CAN HEAR THEM.
THE TANK.
IGNORE THE SOUNDS. IGNORE THE SMELLS.
CLEAR YOUR MIND.
ESCAPE.
ESCAPE-- TO YOUR MOST PRIVATE PLACE-- IN YOUR MIND.
YOUR PRIVATE PLACE IT'S ALWAYS THERE, WAITING FOR YOU.
IN YOUR MIND.
IT'S WHERE YOU WENT WHEN YOU WERE A KID AND THINGS GOT BAD.
IT SAVED YOUR LIFE WHEN THE MISSION WENT ALL WRONG.
IT'S ALWAYS THERE FOR YOU
GO. IT'S EASY. YOU CAN ALWAYS DO IT.
IT'S EASY.

SEPTEMBER BREEZE.
GENTLE NEW ENGLAND SUN.
DRY LEAVES DANCING, CRACKLING LIKE FIRE.
HEAVENLY CALM
YOU'RE CLEAR.
NOW REMEMBER.
REMEMBER EVERYTHING.

WE'D MET A FEW HOURS EARLIER
OUR CONVERSATION TRAILED OFF.
THERE DIDN'T SEEM TO BE ANYTHING WORTH SAYING.

SHE CIRCLED, LIKE A BOXER SIZING UP AN OPPONENT.
SHE FROZE, WARY, A BUTTERFLY PERCHED ON A LEAF--
--READY TO FLY AWAY.
HER HANDS TREMBLED

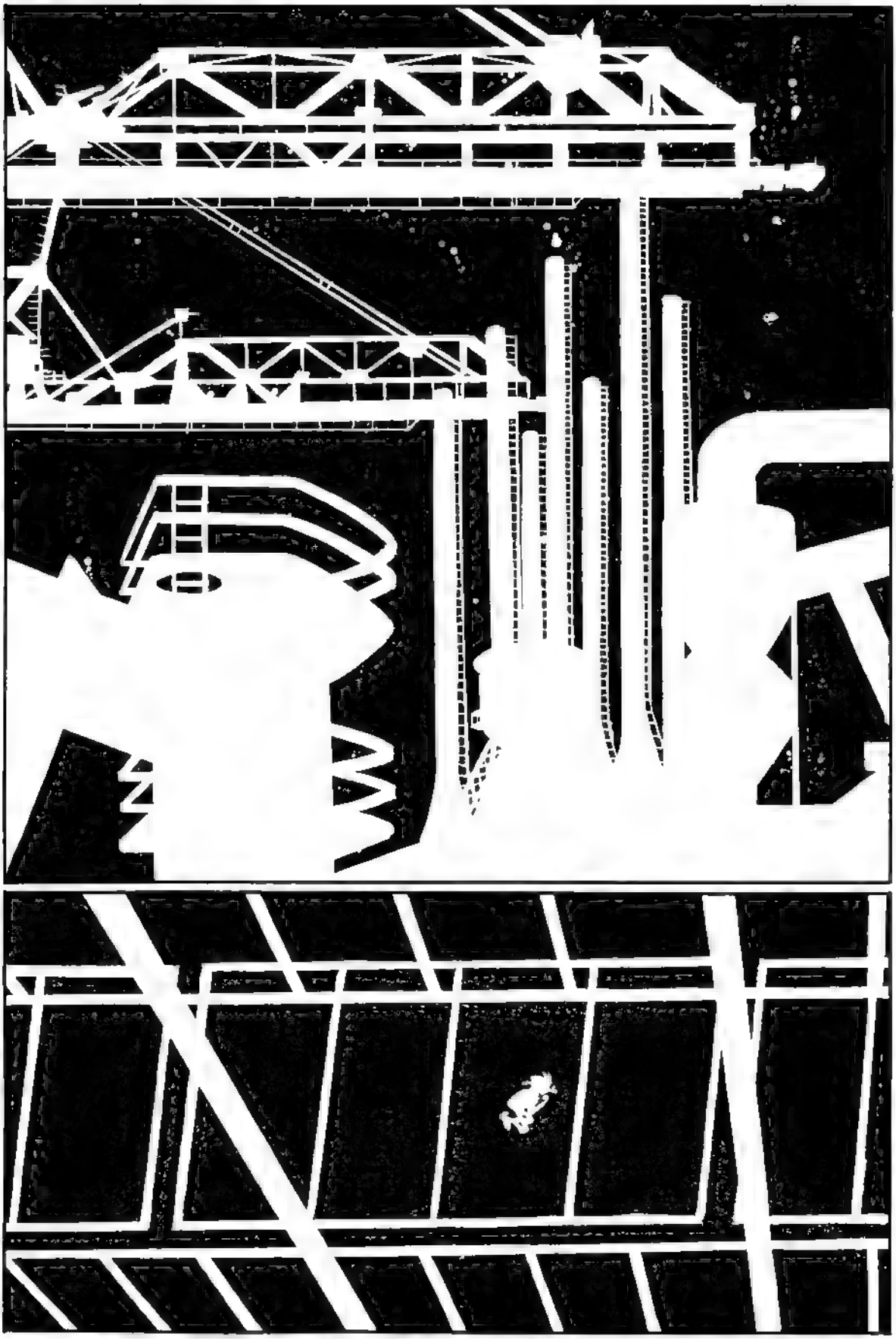
A SOUND THAT BROUGHT BACK MEMORIES
THE WRONG KIND.
FUPP
UNGG
SOMETHING STABBED MY NECK.
NOT A BULLET.
WALLACE?
...
MY BODY DIED
MY HEAD WAS A BOWLING BALL LOLLING AROUND ON A USELESS PILE OF MEAT.
USELESS. I WAS USELESS.
BUT I COULD HEAR.
I COULD SEE.

DON'T FIGHT ME DON'T FIGHT ME I WON'T HURT YOU
SHE STRUGGLED.
SHE KICKED.
DON'T DAMAGE HER. DAMN IT DON'T DAMAGE HER
I WAS USELESS.
I COULDN'T MOVE A MUSCLE.
BUT I HAD TO MOVE
I COULDN'T LIFT MY ARMS.
BUT I HAD TO.
I HAD TO

DAMN IT WHAT'S THAT GUY MADE OUT OF? HE'S GETTING UP!
NO
HE ISN'T.
F4PP
GHA

THAT'S IT. THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT.
NOTHING TO DO NOW BUT RELAX AND WAIT FOR THE TRANQUILIZER THEY SHOT ME WITH TO WORK ITS WAY OUT OF MY SYSTEM.
WAIT TILL MORNING. AND FREEDOM.
HHUKK
RRGG
WAIT ENJOY THE COMPANY.
WAIT--AND WONDER=

ESTHER.
WHERE ARE YOU?

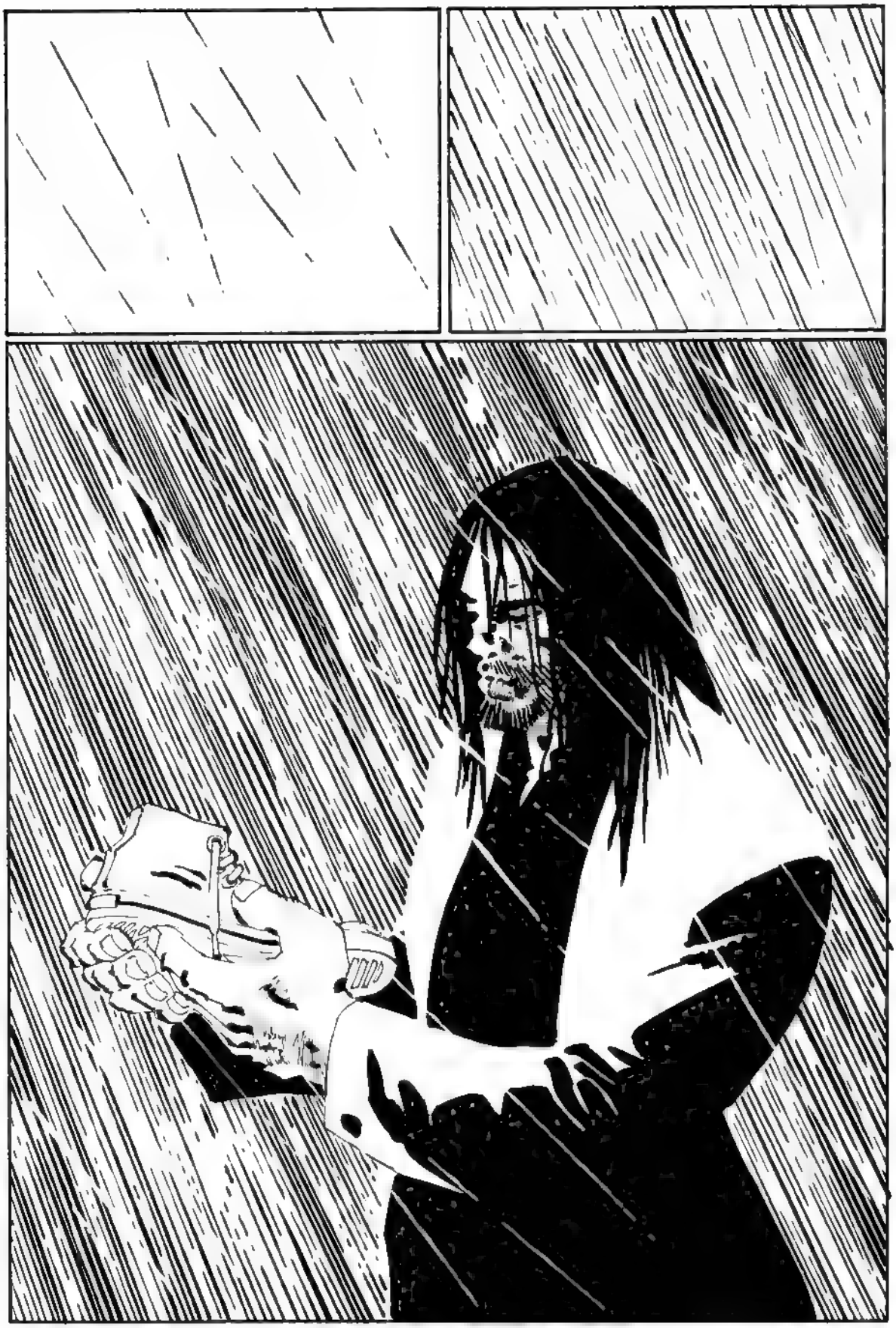


WHAT THE HELL...
THAT'S YOUR NEW HAIRSTYLE. IT'S QUITE FLATTERING
SO MUCH ABOUT YOU IS GOING TO CHANGE.
YOU'RE A VERY LUCKY YOUNG WOMAN FEW WHO LIVE GET A SECOND CHANCE. A SECOND LIFE.
A LIFE FREE FROM PAINFUL CHOICES. A LIFE IN WHICH YOU WILL NEVER BE ALONE.
YOU W.LL BE REMADE. IMPROVED.
BODY AND SOUL.

BY THE TIME WE'RE FINISHED WITH YOU, YOU'LL HAVE A NEW NAME--A NEW HISTORY--AND NO MEMORY OF ANY MOMENT MY PEOPLE WILL NOT HAVE CREATED FOR YOU.
YOUR FIGURE REQUIRES NO ENHANCEMENT NATURE CRAFTED IT TO PERFECTION. BUT WE WILL HAVE TO TOUCH UP YOUR FACE A BIT.
MAKE IT A TAD LESS ETHNIC.

A TAD MORE MARKET-ABLE.

MORNING. THEY LET ME OUT
BAR
I STOP BY MY LOFT TO CLEAN MYSELF UP AND GET INTO SOME FRESH CLOTHES.
IT'S PUSHING NOON BY THE TIME I REACH THE SALOON LOOKING FOR WITNESSES.
WHAT, I'M SUPPOSED TO REMEMBER EVERY BROAD WHO COMES INTO THIS JOINT?
YOU DRINKING OR NOT.? THIS PLACE FILLS UP PRETTY QUICK. I ONLY GOT ROOM FOR PAYING CUSTOMERS
SORRY, HANDSOME. I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT LAST NIGHT I MUST'VE BEEN THREE SHEETS BY THE TIME YOU SHOWED UP
BUT BUY ME A LITTLE HAIR OF THE DOG AND I'LL TELL THE COPS ANYTHING YOU WANT.
IT'S LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED.
I BEGIN TO WONDER IF IT DID.
HEY! LONGHAIR!
HEH DON'T YOU HATE IT WHEN THEY CALL US THAT?
I'M DOWN ON MY LUCK, BUD. THINK YOU COULD SPARE A COUPLE BUCKS?
SURE.
...
...TELL YOU WHAT. I'LL GIVE YOU TWENTY FOR THAT SHOE.
SOLID, MAN!
WHATEVER FLOATS YOUR BOAT!



COLONEL. WE MAY HAVE A PROB_EM.

FM

DON'T TAKE THIS PERSONAL, BOY, BUT YOU MIGHT JUST BE OFF YOUR NUT.

YOU DON'T KNOW HER LAST NAME. YOU DON'T KNOW HER ADDRESS. YOU GOT NO PICTURE OF HER. WHAT YOU GOT IS YOUR OWN BEAT-UP TENNIS SHOE.
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN, BUT YOU GOTTA UNDERSTAND YOU'RE NOT GIVING ME ONE WHOLE HELL OF A LOT TO WORK WITH.
I UNDERSTAND, I'M GRATEFUL FOR WHATEVER HELP YOU CAN GIVE ME.
"HELP"? YOU JUST LEAVE THIS JOB TO THE EXPERTS, JUNIOR STAY OUT OF OUR WAY.
WHAT THE HELL YOU DOING THERE, SONNY?
YOU WANTED A PICTURE OF HER
YEAH, SURE. BUT I AIN'T MADE OUT OF TIME.
SAY-- YOU ARE QUITE THE ARTISTE!
THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING. THIS I CAN WORK WITH. I'LL CIRCULATE IT TO EVERY COP IN THE STATE-- PUT MY BEST MEN ON THE CASE.
YOU JUST RUN ON HOME, NOW WAIT TO HEAR FROM US.
NO, SIR. I WON'T. WITH OR WITHOUT YOUR HELP-- I'M GOING TO FIND HER.

DON'T GO INTERFERING W.TH A POLICE INVESTIGA-TION, SQUIRT.
I'M ONLY TELLING YOU ONCE.
CRMPPL CRUNCH CRNCH
PATCH ME THROUGH TO MANSON, HILDY.
YES, SIR.

SKRIK
SKRIK
SKRIK
SON OF A BITCH WHAT KIND OF TOWN'S HE THINK HE LIVES IN?
SON OF A BITCH I GOT A WIFE AND KIDS TO THINK ABOUT

BRINGG!
MANSON HERE, LIEUTENANT
GET THE BOYS TOGETHER I GOT A JOB FOR YOU.
YES, SIR!

SON OF A BITCH...

EEEEEEEE
EEEE
POLICE
EEE
POLICE
EEE

YOU REMEMBER ME, LONGHAIR?
I REMEMBER YOU, MANSON AND I'VE TAKEN QUITE ENOUGH FROM YOU
TALK SWEET. SWEAR ON YOUR MOMMA'S GRAVE YOU'RE GONNA KEEP YOUR BUTT OUT OF THE MISSING PERSONS BUSINESS--
--AND MAYBE WE'LL LEAVE YOU STILL ABLE TO WALK.
I'LL BE ABLE TO WALK. BUT YOU'LL BE A MESS IF YOU DON'T GET THAT STICK OUT OF MY FACE.
OOOH! I DO BELIEVE THE MAN IS LOOKING TO DO THE RODNEY!

I'VE GIVEN YOU FAIR WARN NG BACK OFF.
HUH

HAVE IT YOUR OWN WAY, THEN.

OOF!
GAA
POP
DAMN!
UNFF!
AAAAA
AAAAA

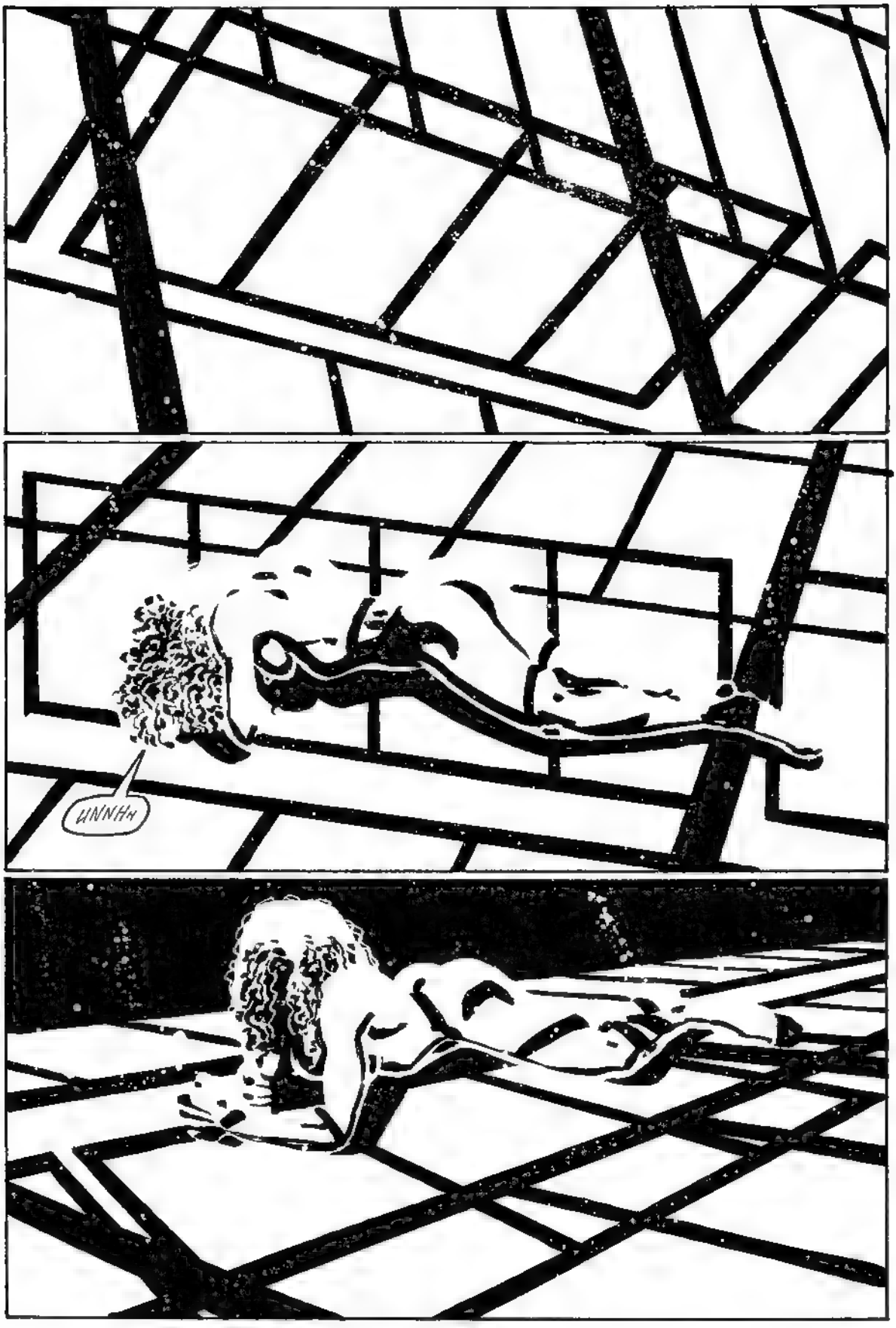
HEFF HEFF
HUFF
AAAAAA
HUOF!
WHUD
KYUNGH
GAAA

WHUH
WHUH
SMAK

HENFF
HUNFF
SON
SON OF A
GYAA
B
TOK
STILL AWAKE, MANSON?
LONGHAIR FAGGOT. GO AHEAD. DO YOUR WORST.

YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE MY WORST.
SLEEP
FAA

BASIN CITY'S FINEST. THEY'RE LOADED WITH CASH. I COULD PAY MY RENT TWICE OVER
LUCKY FOR ME, I'VE ONLY GOT TO PAY IT ONCE-- WHICH LEAVES ME A SOLID GRAND TO SPARE
I'LL NEED IT
WHATEVER'S GOING ON, THE COPS ARE WORKING FOR THE ENEMY.
THAT MAKES THE GAME TRICKY-- BUT EVERY CLUE HELPS.
I WILL FIND YOU, ESTHER.
WHEREVER YOU ARE


UNNHH

WHERE AM I?
WHERE AM I?
OH, GOD WHERE AM I?

YOU'RE NOWHERE.
YOU'RE NOTHING.
YOU'RE NOBODY.
YOU DON'T EXIST.

FOUR OF MY BEST MEN --AND HE TOOK THEM OUT LIKE THEY WERE CUB SCOUTS. NONE OF THEM GOT SO MUCH AS A SHOT OFF
BLAGG
MUST BE SOME KINDA MARINE, HUH?
NAVY SEAL, ACTUALLY. A WAR HERO AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR.
I DON'T CARE IF HE WON THE DAMN NOBEL PEACE PRIZE. AIN'T NOBODY GETS AWAY WITH GIVING MY BOYS THAT KINDA POUNDING. IT'S HELL ON MORALE.
I'M BRINGING HIM DOWN HARD.
YOU'LL DO NOTHING OF THE SORT. I WON'T RISK THE EXPOSURE.
LEAVE HIM TO MY PEOPLE

I'M NOT ABOUT TO START ARGUING --NOT WITH YOU, COLONEL. YOU'VE DONE WAY TOO GOOD BY ME.
PRAY I NEVER DO BAD BY YOU, LIEBOWITZ.
YOU'LL DESTROY ALL RECORDS OF THE INCIDENT-- AND, OF COURSE, HIS INITIAL REPORT. YOU'LL SWEAR YOUR MEN TO SILENCE
THAT WON'T BE A TOUGH SELL. THE BOYS AREN'T EXACTLY BRAGGING.
AW, JEEZ...

...JEEZ LOUISE, WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT.?
WHAT IS THIS? THE MILLION-BABE MARCH?
A CHEER-LEADING SQUAD
SUCH PURPOSELESS, POINTLESS LIVES. SUCH A WASTE OF MATERIAL.
YOU'VE GOT A FUNNY WAY OF PUTTING THINGS. DAMN FUNNY.
YOUR INSTINCTS SERVE YOU POORLY, DETECTIVE IF YOU DON'T WANT ANSWERS, DON'T ASK QUESTIONS.
STAY IN THE DARK YOU'LL BE HAPPIER THERE

I KNEW YOU'D PAY AS SOON AS YOU COULD, WALLACE I NEVER DOUBTED YOU FOR A SECOND.
I SWEAR, I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU SO JUMPY. IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?
EVERYTHING'S FINE, MA'AM. I'M JUST IN A HURRY. I'VE GOT TO CATCH A TRAIN OUT OF TOWN
I'M NOT SURE HOW LONG I'LL BE GONE
TAKING A LITTLE VACATION? MAYBE WITH A CERTAIN YOUNG LADY WHOSE LIFE YOU SAVED?
I WISH I WERE
YOU COULD ASK HER IT NEVER HURTS TO ASK. YOU DID GET HER PHONE NUMBER, DIDN'T YOU?
I WISH I HAD.
SILLY BOY. TOO SHY FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
FOLLOW ME.

YOU DON'T ARGUE WITH MRS. MENDOZA. YOU JUST DON'T.
SHE FUMBLES THROUGH HER BUREAU, HUMMING AND SHAKING HER HIPS IN TIME WITH A SALSA TUNE COMING FROM HER RADIO
I GET TWITCHY. AS LONG AS I'M STILL HERE--SHE'S NOT SAFE.
UH, MA'AM
YOU KEEP YOUR SHIRT ON, BOY.
HERE YOU GO.
IT'S A GOOD THING ONE OF US WAS WEARING HER THINKING CAP, EH?

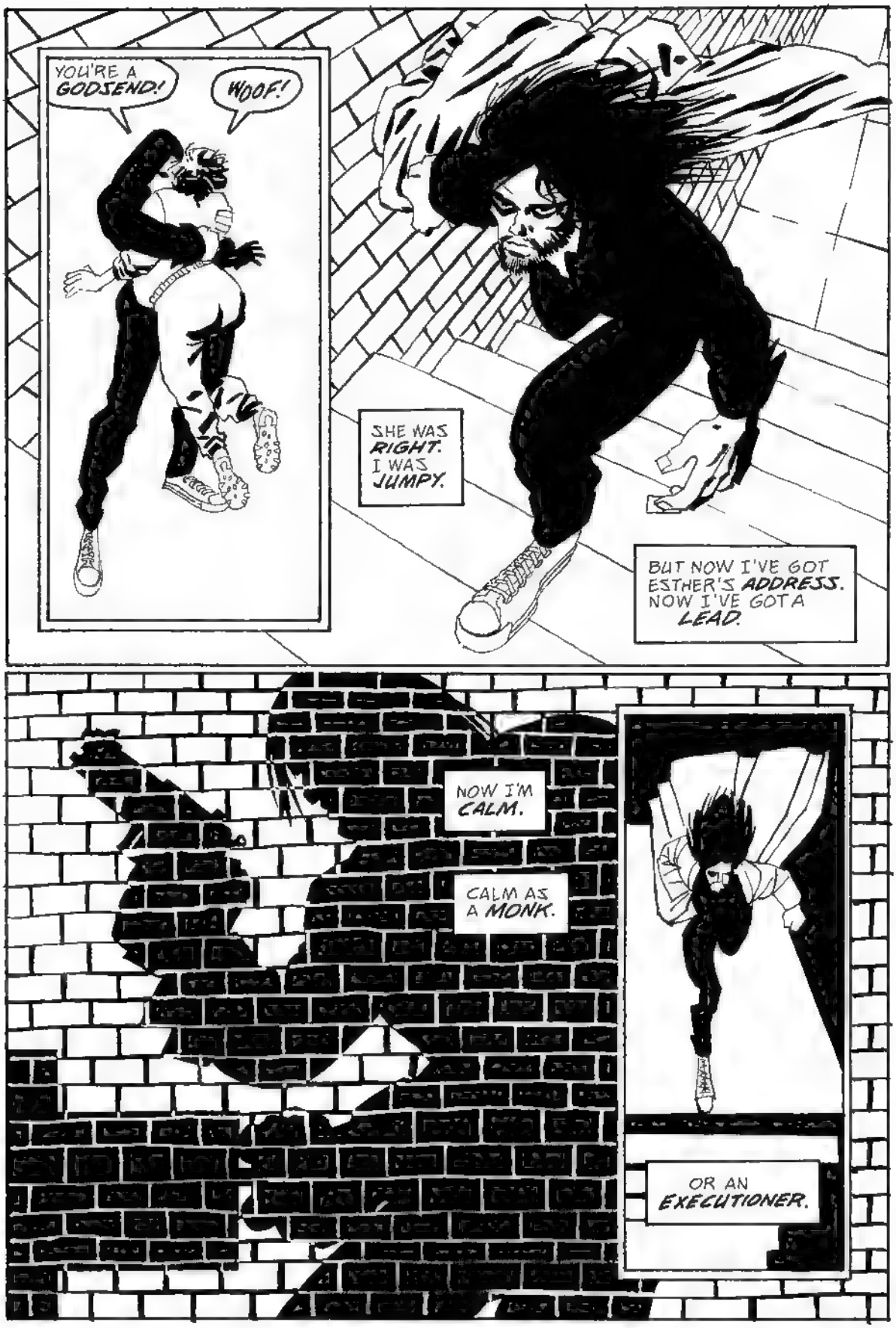
ESTHER'S AN ACTRESS. LOOKING FOR WORK.

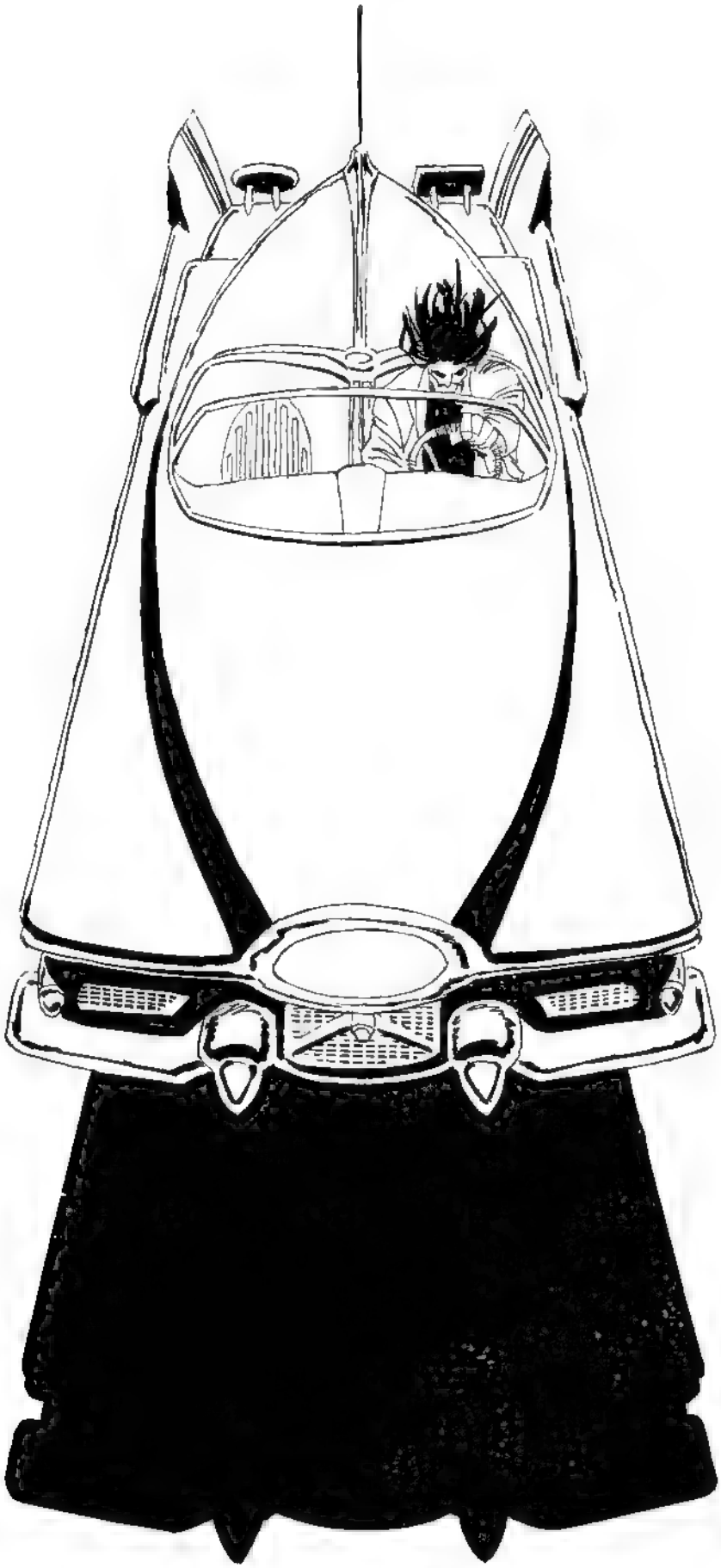
SO SHE'S GOT A BUSINESS CARD.

IT'S ALL HERE. RIGHT HERE. RIGHT ON HER BUSINESS CARD.

HER FULL NAME. HER PHONE NUMBER. HER ADDRESS.

HER ADDRESS.


YOU'RE A GODSEND!
WOOF!
SHE WAS RIGHT. I WAS JUMPY.
BUT NOW I'VE GOT ESTHER'S ADDRESS. NOW I'VE GOT A LEAD.
NOW I'M CALM.
CALM AS A MONK.
OR AN EXECUTIONER.



THE NIGHT TURNS COLD.
SO DOES MY STOMACH.

NFF
BASTARD...
...YOU BASTARD...
...WHAT DO WANT, YOU BASTARD?
AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ESTHER?

FM

CLICK

KIKK
KANK
KINK

SKIK
TOK
TOK

TOK
TOK
CHINK
CHIK
CHAKK

TOK
TOK

TOK
TOK
WHAT DO YOU WANT, YOU BASTARD?
AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ESTHER?
YOU'VE GOT ME WRONG, MA'AM I'M HERE TO HELP

WHY THE HELL SHOULD I BELIEVE YOU?
BECAUSE I'M TELLING THE TRUTH. BECAUSE I'VE GOT NO REASON TO LIE.
HERE. LET ME HELP YOU UP. TAKE MY HAND
PLEASE. TAKE MY HAND.
HAVE IT YOUR OWN WAY, THEN
STAY AWAY FROM ME, YOU BASTARD. YOU SON OF A BITCH. IT WAS YOU. IT WAS YOU ESTHER WAS SCARED OF.

SCARED. FOR WEEKS. LIKE SHE WAS BEING STALKED. SHE WOULDN'T EVEN TALK ABOUT IT, SHE WAS SO SCARED AND NOW SHE'S GONE. VANISHED.
AND HERE YOU ARE. COMING AFTER ME THIS TIME.
YOU'VE GOT IT AL.. WRONG, MA'AM. YOU RE EXHAUSTED YOU'VE GOT TO SETTLE DOWN
OW!
STOP IT. JUST STOP IT. THIS IS CRAZY.

PLEASE. DON'T MAKE ME HURT YOU.
ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT. JUST LET ME GO.

I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY. I'M NOT THINKING STRAIGHT. I'VE BEEN FRANTIC. I HAVEN'T SLEPT IN DAYS.
SLOW DOWN. TAKE YOUR TIME. TELL ME WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON. I WANT TO HELP.
SHE'S DEAD, ISN'T SHE? ESTHER'S DEAD, ISN'T SHE?
I DON'T KNOW.
I WAS WITH HER WHEN SHE WAS KIDNAPPED. BUT I DON'T KNOW MUCH. AND I WANT TO HELP
KIDNAPPED. OH, GOD. I KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG BUT SHE WOULDN'T TALK ABOUT IT. SHE LOOKED AWFUL. SHE DIDN'T EAT.

ARE YOU HER ROOMMATE, MA'AM?
DELIA. MY NAME'S DELIA. AND, YEAH, ESTHER AND ME, WE SPLIT THE RENT
TWO WANNABE AC-TRESSES, BOTH BROKE AS ALL HELL
WHAT'S YOUR STORY? AND WILL IT RUIN YOUR LIFE IF I SMOKE?
SNAP
"FRIEND," HUH? ESTHER'S BEEN HOLDING OUT ON ME AND I CAN SEE WHY.
SMOKE AWAY
MY NAME'S WALLACE. I'M JUST A GUY. A CONCERNED FRIEND.

ACTUALLY, WE'D JUST MET THAT NIGHT. THE NIGHT SHE WAS--
--HOLD ON. HOLD ON
FREEZING. ALL OF A SUDDEN I'M FREEZING.
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
YOU'RE IN SHOCK. MILD SHOCK. WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU WARM
HERE YOU GO. THIS'LL HELP.
BE CAREFUL WITH THAT CIGARETTE.
NOT WARM ENOUGH. HOLD ME HOLD ME CLOSE.

DON'T WORRY THIS'LL PASS. YOU'LL BE OKAY
STILL FREEZING. CAN'T STOP SHAKING. HOLD ME CLOSER.
CLOSER.
CLOSER.
KRUNCH

YOU'RE NOT JUST BEING A GOOD GUY. YOU LIKE ESTHER
DID YOU KISS HER?
YES
WAS IT NICE?
YES.
AM I MAKING YOU UNCOMFORTABLE?
VERY

LET ME MAKE YOU MORE COMFORTABLE, THEN.
YOU'VE STOPPED SHAKING.
MY HEART'S STILL POUNDING.
FEEL IT.

NOW WHO'S SHAKING?
I AM MA'AM, I BARELY KNOW YOU
SHUT UP
CRASH!

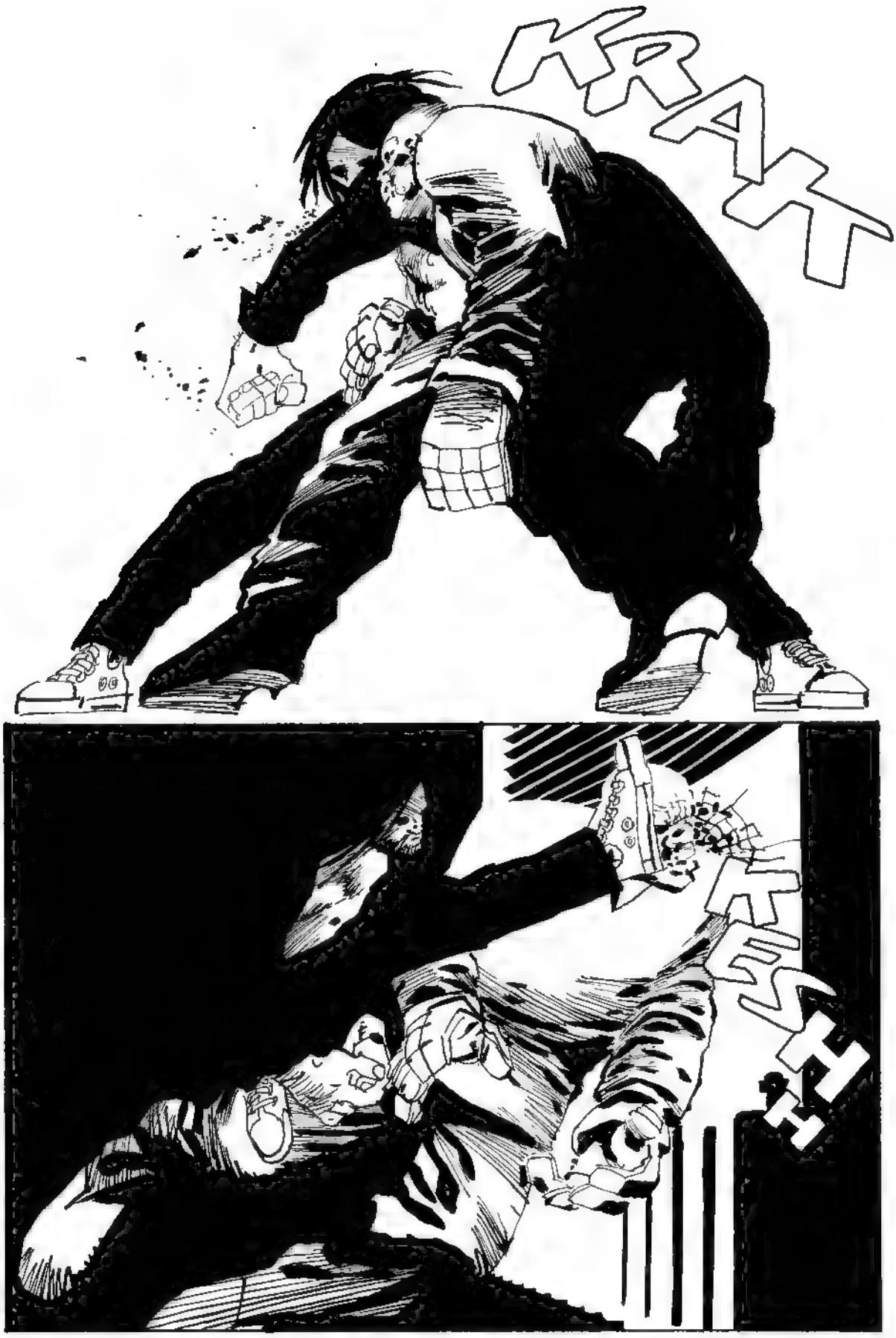
YOUNG LADY, YOU ARE COMING WITH ME
AND YOU, SIR, ARE SIMPLY GOING TO DIE.

WHUD
YOU'RE A QUICK LITTLE THING. I SHOULD'VE BROUGHT A FLY SWATTER.
YOU SHOULD'VE BROUGHT AN ARMY.

YOUR NOSE IS BROKEN YOUR JAW'S NEXT.
IT'S UP TO YOU

PEASANT. I'LL BREAK YOU IN HALF.
SPUTT
GRAF

HOOFF
HEFF
KRAK


KRAK
SPLAT

HERGG
HUNFF
DON'T.

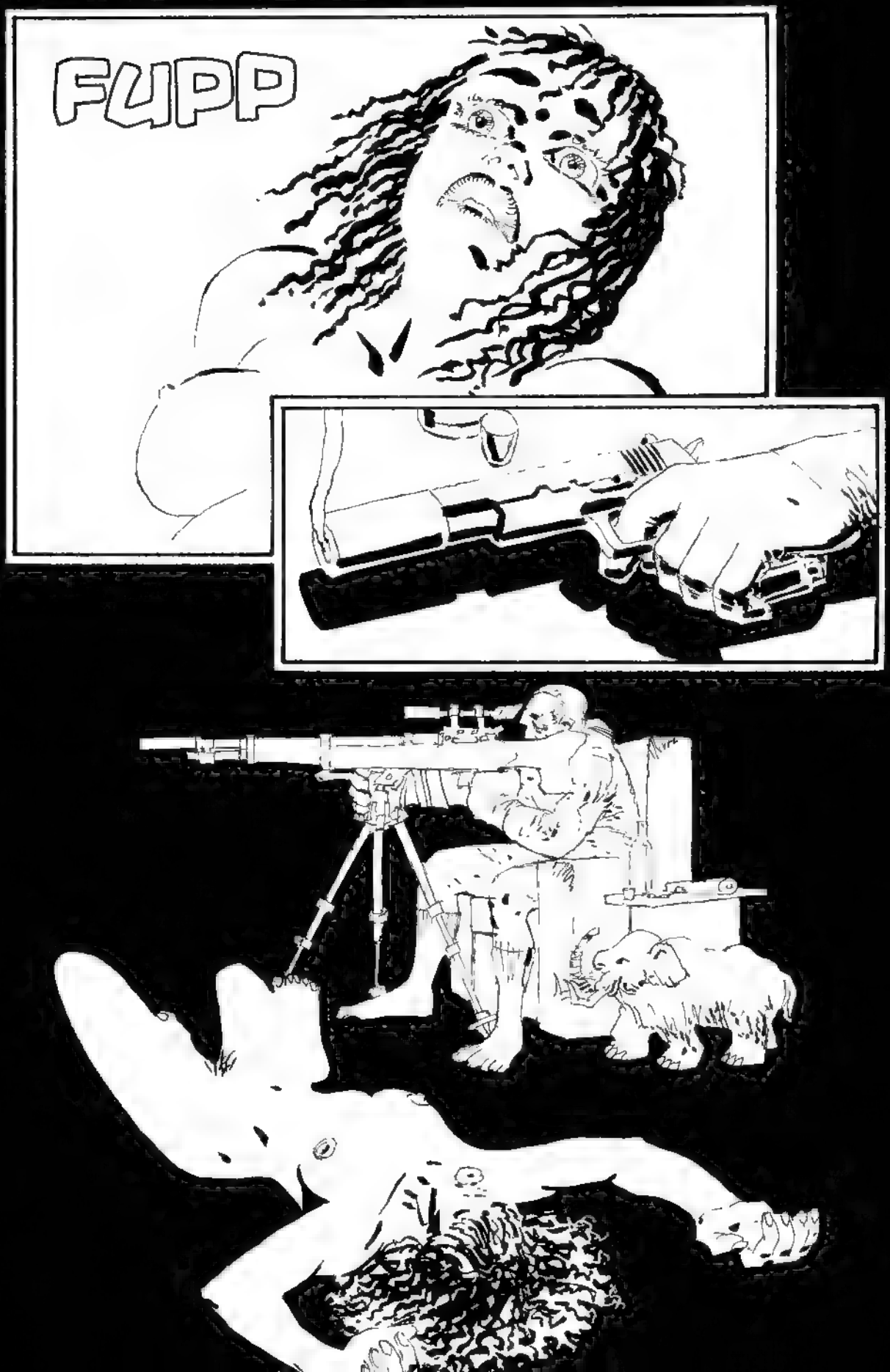
AARR

TOK
TOK

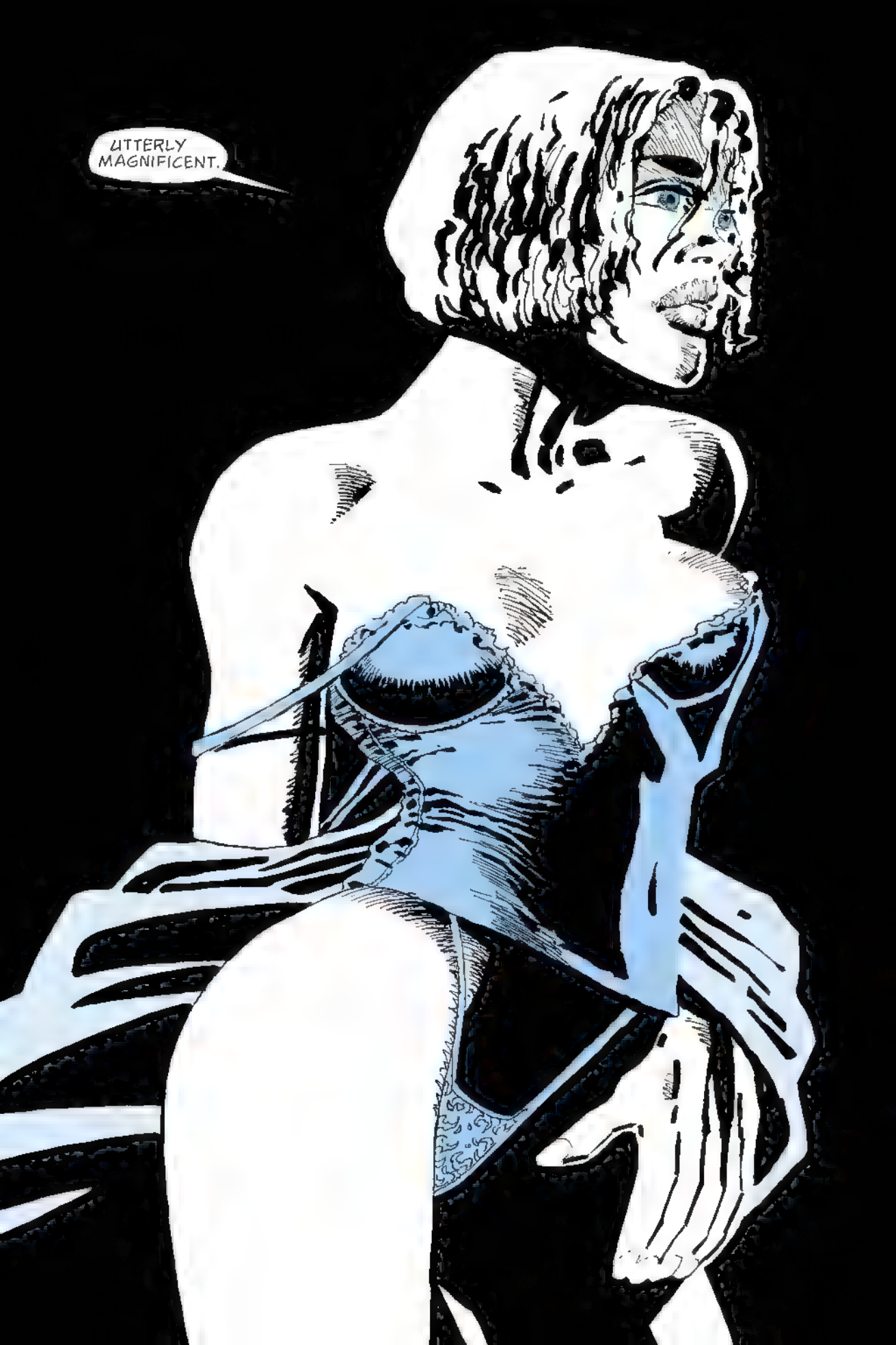
TOK
TOK

PYP
PYP
DON'T POLISH OFF THAT BOTTLE TOO FAST, WILD MAN. SAVE SOME FOR ME.

I DIDN'T SHOW UP AT THAT SALOON JUST LOOKING FOR LOVE. YOU GOT MY HOSPI-TALITY. I WANT YOUR BOOZE.
TOP IT OFF WITH A LITTLE MORE OF THAT OH-SO-FINE BLOW OF YOURS, AND I'LL MAKE ALL YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE.
HEY--WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR BEARD? AND WHAT'S WITH THOSE GUNS?


FUPP

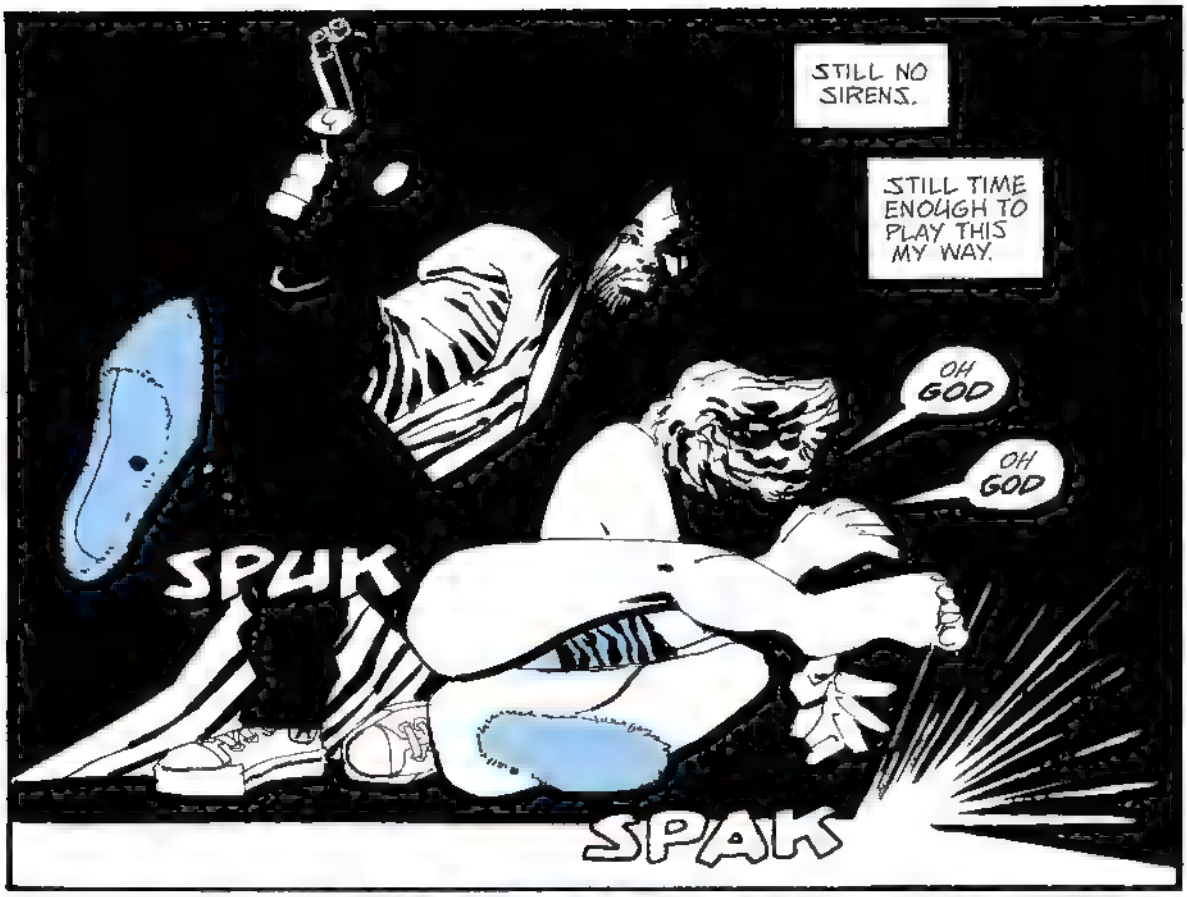
THE NIGHT GOES AS QUIET AS IT EVER GETS.
NO SIRENS YET.
SHE FINALLY EXHALES.
WALLACE. YOU'RE MAGNIFICENT.


UTTERLY MAGNIFICENT.

DON'T PUT ON YOUR COAT. NOT JUST YET. STAY AWHILE.
WE'VE GOT TO GET GOING. THERE'S NO REASON TO THINK WE'RE OUT OF DANGER.
GET DRESSED-- AND BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU WALK YOU SHOULDN'T BE EXPOSED.
WE'VE JUST HAD A SERIOUS BONDING EXPERIENCE. I WANT TO BE EXPOSED--
I TRY NOT TO LOOK AT HER. SHE'S WAY TOO EASY ON THE EYE.
WAY TOO EASY.
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A RAVISHINGLY BEAUTIFUL NYMPHOMANIAC TO DISTRACT A GUY
--TO YOU. I WANT TO BE EXPOSED
THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, MA'AM.
STAY AWAY FROM THE WINDOWS.

I LIKE IT WHEN YOU CALL ME "MA'AM." I LIKE IT A LOT.
DO WHAT I SAY GET AWAY FROM THAT WINDOW
MAKE ME
PLEASE

THERE'S NO POINT IN TALKING.
THERE'S NO TIME FOR TALKING.
SPAK
WHEN YOU'RE UP AGAINST A CONSPIRACY--
SPAK
--YOU'RE FIGHTING ENEMIES WHO RARELY STRIKE ALONE.


STILL NO SIRENS.
STILL TIME ENOUGH TO PLAY THIS MY WAY.
OH GOD
OH GOD
SPUK
SPAK

NO MORE DEBATE. DO WHAT I SAY. GRAB SOME CLOTHES PUT THEM ON. WEAR SHOES YOU CAN RUN IN. STAY LOW.
WHAT-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I'M GOING TO KILL SOMEBODY
PUT YOUR CLOTHES ON
GO!
I HATE SNIPERS.
YOU SHOULD HAVE THE GUTS TO LOOK A MAN IN THE EYE WHEN YOU KILL HIM.
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK

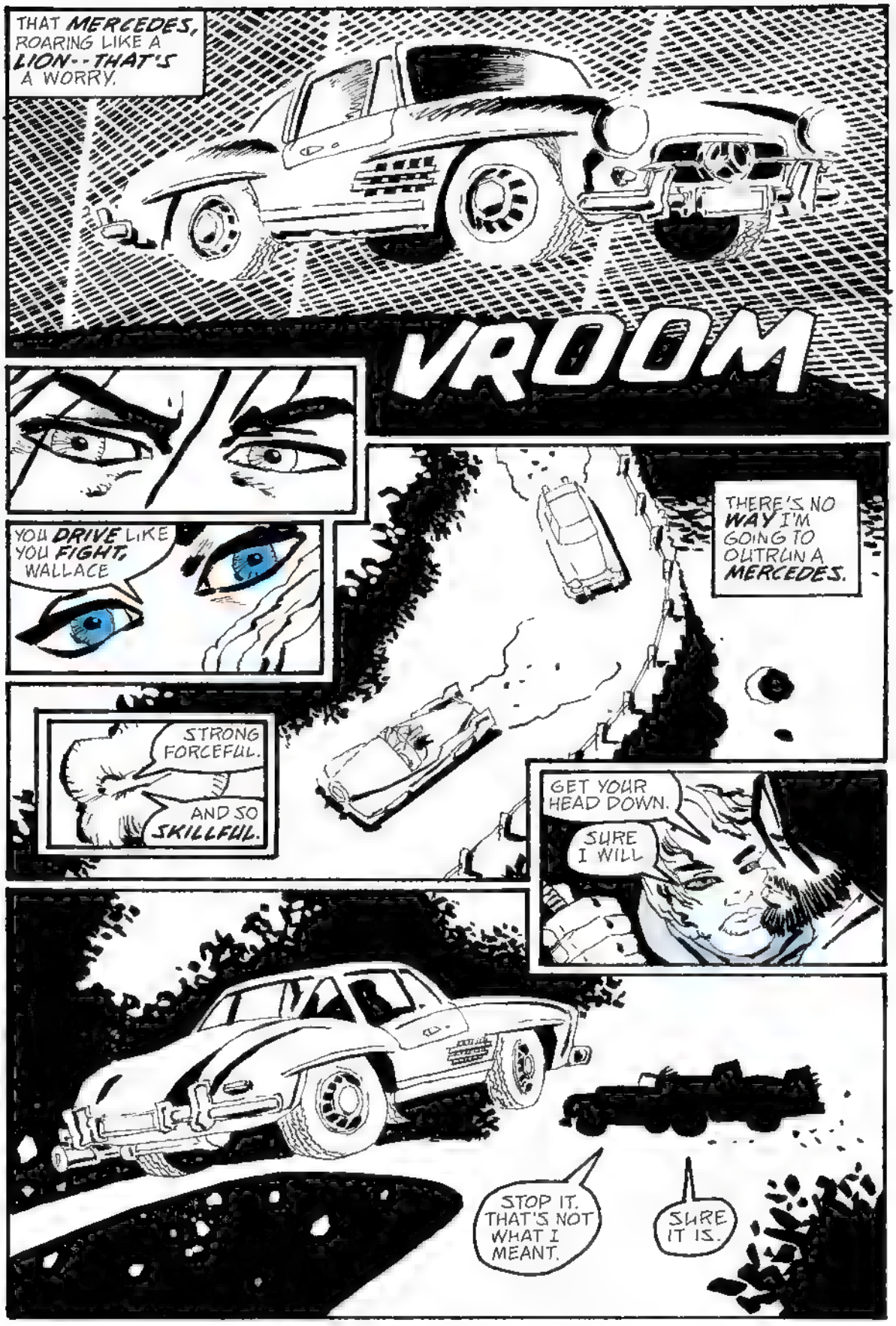
FWPP
SPAK
SPAK
GO AHEAD, BUDDY
TAKE THE BAIT.
LET ME GET A FIX ON THAT LITTLE FLASH.
FWPP
THERE WE GO...

BLAM

SPUKK

IT'S BEEN A WHILE
WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
WHAT?

MY OUTFIT. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
OOF!
YOU DIDN'T EVEN LOOK.
SIRENS NOW, DISTANT.
THE LEAST OF MY WORRIES.


THAT MERCEDES, ROARING LIKE A LION--THAT'S A WORRY.
VROOM
YOU DRIVE LIKE YOU FIGHT, WALLACE
THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO OUTRUN A MERCEDES.
STRONG FORCEFUL.
AND SO SKILLFUL.
GET YOUR HEAD DOWN.
SURE I WILL
STOP IT. THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
SURE IT IS.

YOU'RE DISTRACTING ME.
SURE I AM.
I MEAN IT. STOP THAT THIS ISN'T THE TIME
SURE IT IS.
BRAKK
BRAKK
SPAK SPAK
YAAA
STAY DOWN!
KASH

SCREEECHH
BRAKK
SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK
IDIOT. HE'S WATCHED TOO MANY MOVIES.
HE SHOULD KNOW--
--YOU DON'T TRY TO SHOOT THE DRIVER--
BRAKK
SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK

BLAM
RRR
--YOU KILL THE CAR.
YAAAA
SKEEE
THE REST USUALLY TAKES CARE OF ITSELF
AAAAA

I FEEL SORT OF BAD. THAT WAS A NICE CAR.
THE OTHER GUY WAS AN IDIOT, TOO.
ONLY IDIOTS TALK ON THE PHONE WHILE THEY DRIVE.
LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I HIT "REDIAL"
BOOP
A NUMBER POPS UP I MEMORIZE IT.

BA-ZOG
SLIGHT TRACE OF A BRITISH ACCENT=
REPORT.
YOUR MEN ARE DEAD
DELIVER THE WOMAN TO ME. OR I WILL FIND YOU. AND I WILL KILL YOU.
HE CLICKS OFF.
EVERY HOUR I GET CLOSER TO THE TRUTH.
I WILL FIND YOU, ESTHER.
WHEREVER YOU ARE

DAWN IS STILL HOURS AWAY

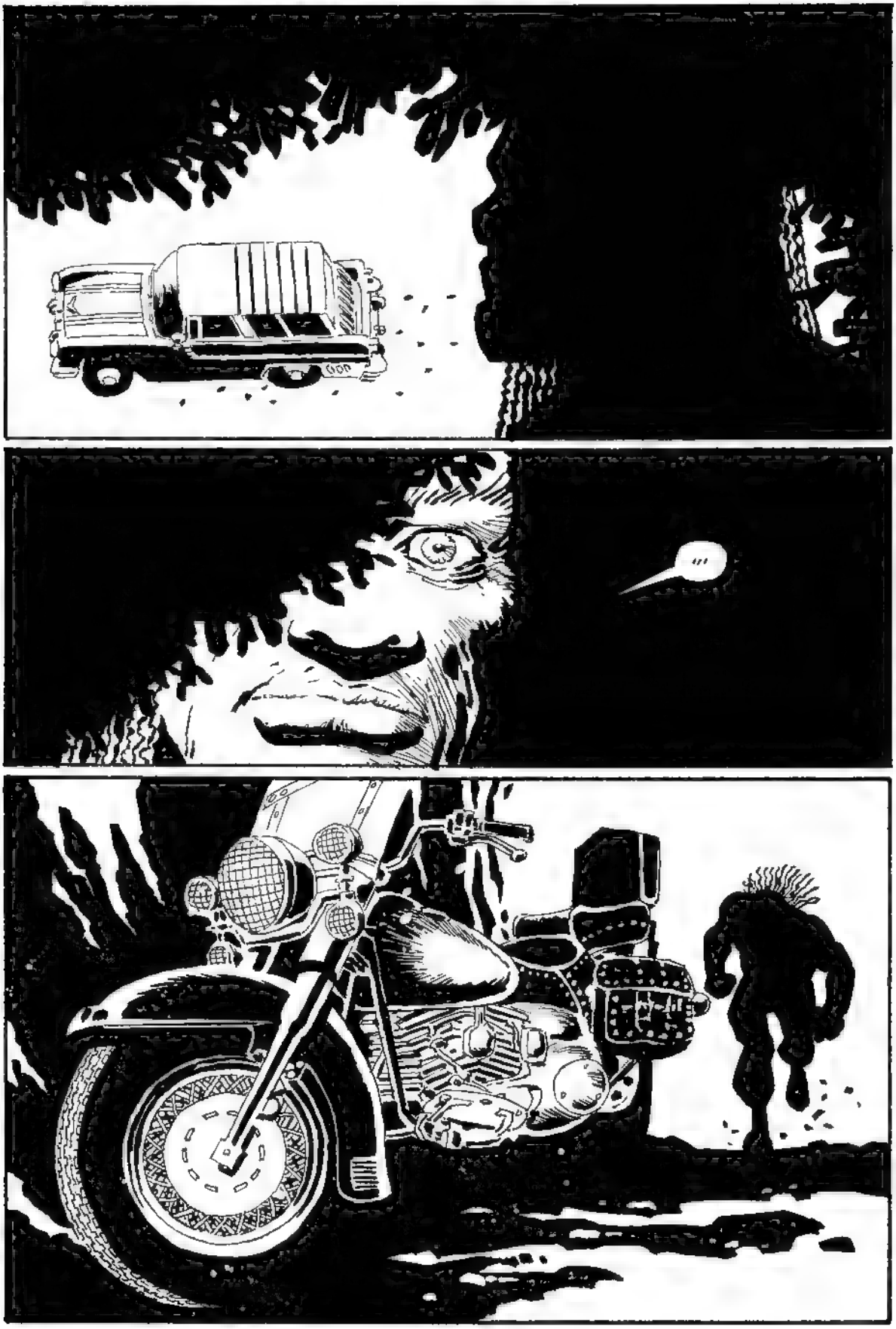
THE WIND BLOWS COLD.
STEEL SLIDES FROM OILED LEATHER.

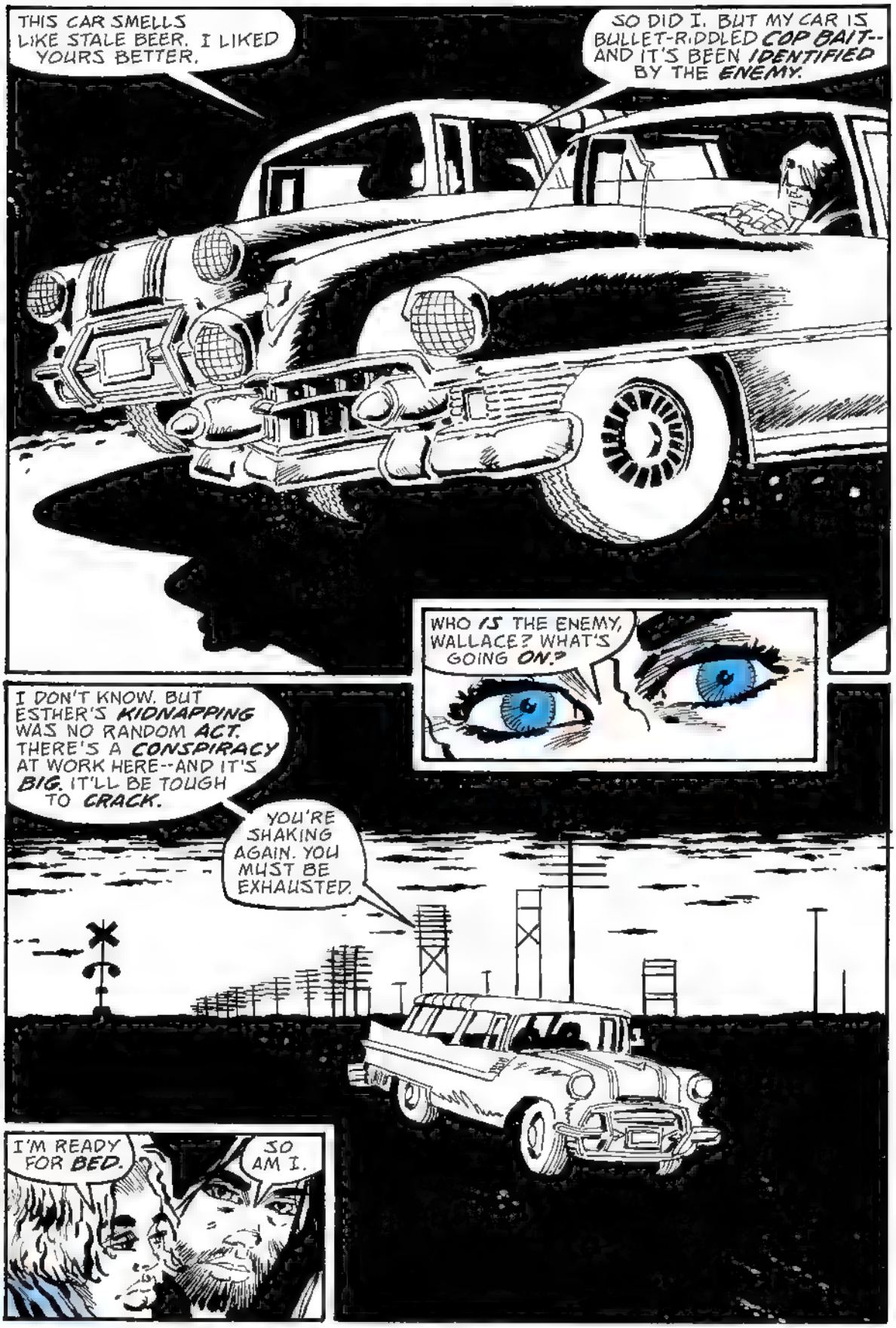
WHUNGG
THPP

GOOD MORNING, CAPTAIN. YOU'RE UP EARLY.
"CARPE AURORUM," I ALWAYS SAY
YOU HEARD IT OFTEN ENOUGH.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, COMMANDER
IT'S BEEN A DAMN LONG WHILE.
HERE COMES ONE OF HIS HUGS.
HERE'S HOPING MY RIBS ARE GOOD AND FLEXIBLE.

MY RIBS HOLD UP FINE. NOT SO MUCH AS A CRACK.
GOOD TO SEE YOU, MAN.
I KNOW THAT LOOK. WHO NEEDS KILLING?
NOBODY, JUST YET. I WANT TO BORROW THE HEAP.
YEAH, I NOTICED YOUR OLD LeSABRE COULD USE SOME BODY WORK--

--THOUGH I GOTTA SAY YOUR PASSENGER DOESN'T. THAT BABE'S HYDRAULIC.
LOOKS LIKE A WILD ONE TO ME.
SHE IS THAT.
YOU MAKE THAT SOUND LIKE A BAD THING.
TAKE IT WHERE YOU CAN GET IT, BUDDY A MAN HAS NEEDS
WHAT I NEED IS THE HEAP.
HA! LOOSEN UP, WILL YOU?
THERE'S MY BABY--ALL GASSED UP AND LOADED FOR WAR.
ANYTHING ELSE I CAN DO YOU FOR?
YEAH. TWO THINGS. A TRACE ON THIS PHONE NUMBER--
--AND A PAIR OF HAND-CUFFS.
MY MAN!
AND I'LL BET SHE GOES FOR IT. YOU LUCKY DOG!




THIS CAR SMELLS LIKE STALE BEER. I LIKED YOURS BETTER.
SO DID I. BUT MY CAR IS BULLET-RIDDLED COP BAIT--AND IT'S BEEN IDENTIFIED BY THE ENEMY.
WHO IS THE ENEMY, WALLACE? WHAT'S GOING ON?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT ESTHER'S KIDNAPPING WAS NO RANDOM ACT. THERE'S A CONSPIRACY AT WORK HERE--AND IT'S BIG. IT'LL BE TOUGH TO CRACK.
YOU'RE SHAKING AGAIN. YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED.
I'M READY FOR BED.
SO AM I.

Last Hope
MOTEL
VACANCY
SHALL I FETCH YOU THE GIDEON?
NO. WE'RE NOT HERE TO READ THE BIBLE.
I'M HERE TO GIVE ORDERS--AND YOU'RE HERE TO FOLLOW THEM.

KLIK

DO EXACTLY WHAT I TELL YOU TO DO. OBEY MY EVERY WORD.
YES, WALLACE.

TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF.
YES, SIR.

LIE DOWN ON THE BED.
YES, BOSS.
CLOSE YOUR EYES.
YES, MASTER.

CHINK
SNAP
MY GOODNESS, HONEY, YOU'RE FULL OF SURPRISES.
DON'T GET ME WRONG. THAT WASN'T A COMPLAINT.

WALLACE?
...

I'M NOT ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO HATES THE SMELL OF CIGARETTES. BUT I NOTICE IT.
SNAP
IT CLINGS TO THE HAIR AND CLOTHES OF ANYBODY WHO SMOKES--AND ANYBODY WHO LIVES WITH A SMOKER.
THERE WASN'T A TRACE OF IT ON ESTHER. YOU'RE NOT HER ROOMMATE.
KRUNCH

YOU SHOULD'VE FOLLOWED YOUR OWN ADVICE, LOVE.
YOU SHOULD'VE STAYED AWAY FROM THE WINDOWS.
GAA
SPAK

I CEASE
TO EXIST.

SPLAT
YOU DROPPED HIM!
I CAN'T COUNT ON YOU FOR ANYTHING!
GORDO SORRY. GORDO FALL DOWN. GROUND SLIPPERY

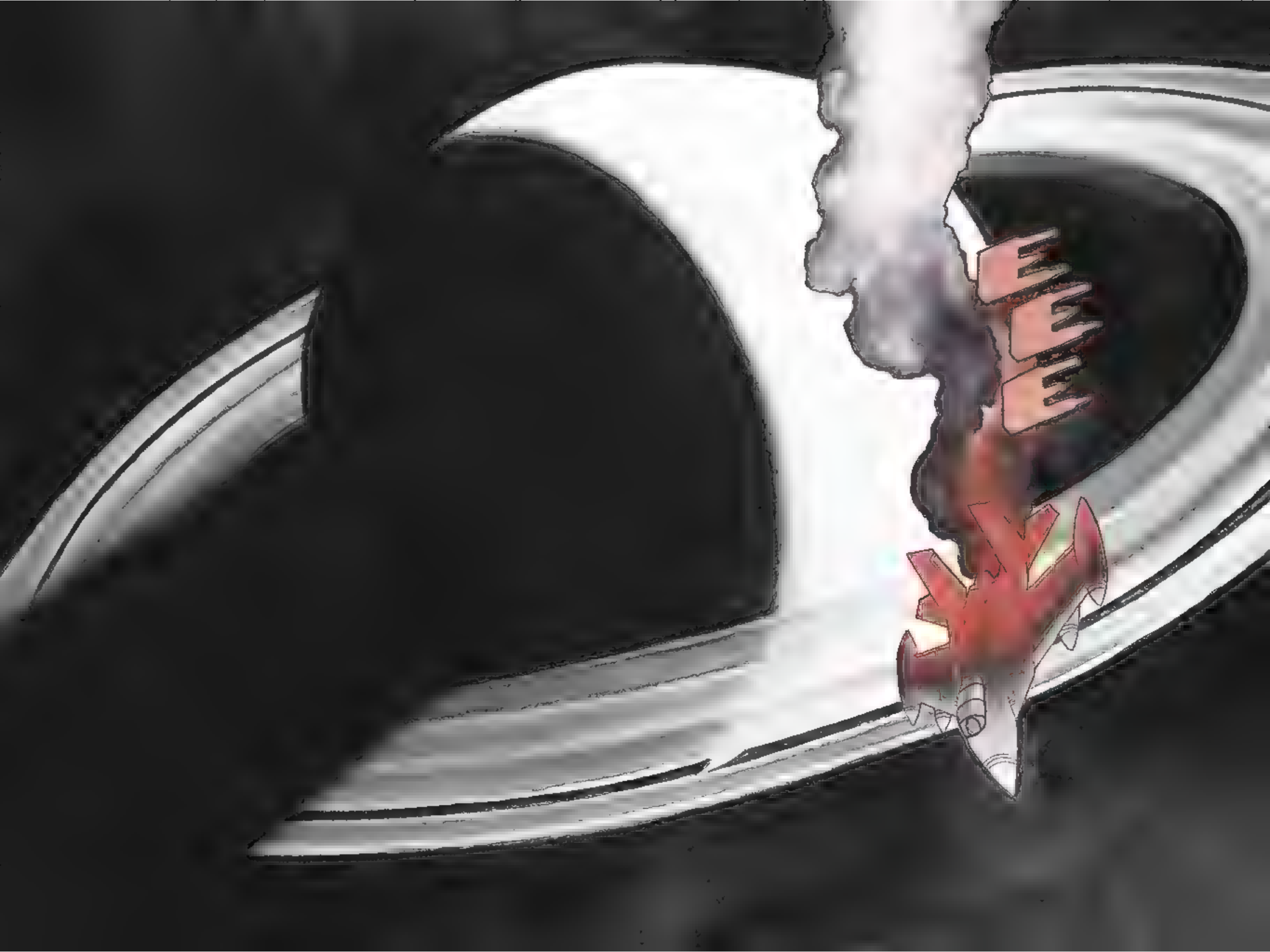
HNH?
HE'S AWAKE.
DON'T WORRY. HE'S GOT ENOUGH TRANK IN HIM TO KEEP CLARK KENT DOWN.
GORDO CATCH BREATH. FEEL BETTER.
GORDO PICK MAN BACK UP NOW.

YOU LACK YOUR USUAL AFTERGLOW, DELIA. COULD IT BE YOU ACTUALLY MET A FELLOW WHO COULD RESIST YOUR LEGENDARY WILES?
HMF! THE GUY'S A MONK!
ALL I HEARD WAS ESTHER! ESTHER! ESTHER!
MAN HAS LARGE PENIS.
POOR DEAR. THERE ARE ONLY TWO TH.NGS YOU LIKE TO DO WITH MEN--AND YOU DIDN'T GET TO DO EITHER OF THEM.
YOU DIDN'T GET TO KILL HIM, AND YOU DIDN'T GET TO--
YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO MOCK ME
GORDO PUT MAN IN CAR. THEN GORDO PUSH CAR
SOON AS GORDO IS TOLD TO PUSH CAR.
THE COCKTAIL IS ALL SET. IT'S A KICKER. HE'LL BE FLYING.
WAIT A MOMENT, MAXINE.
LET ME SAY GOOD-BYE TO HIM.

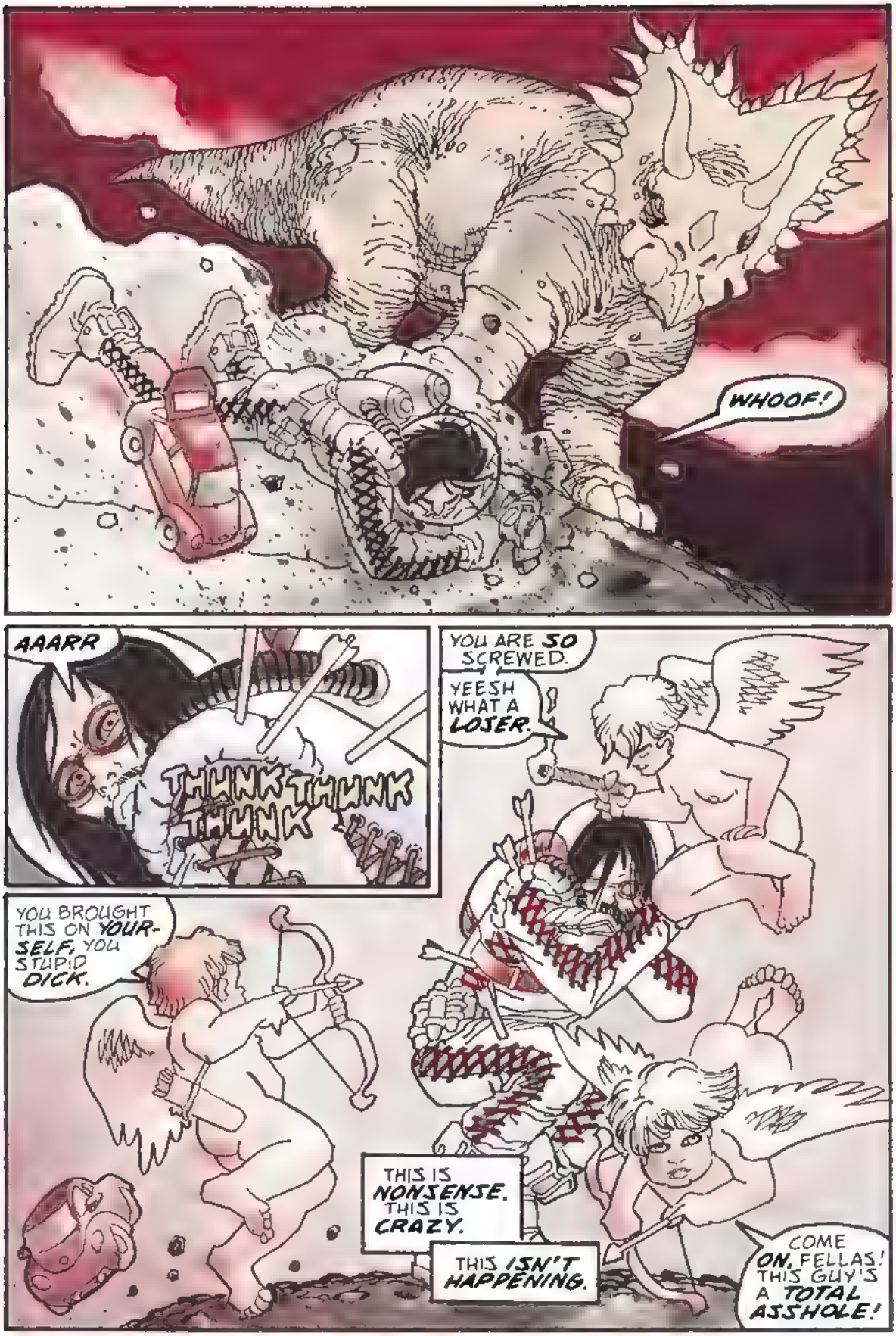
I'M AFRAID THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GO VERY BADLY FOR YOU, DARLING
YOU SEE, WE COULDN'T SIMPLY MAKE YOU DISAPPEAR. YOU'RE A WAR HERO. LORD ONLY KNOWS WHO'D COME LOOKING FOR YOU. SO WE'RE PLAYING TO STEREO-TYPE.
YOU'LL BE A CRAZED VET, DRUGGED OUT OF YOUR MIND, FOUND IN A CRASHED STOLEN CAR WITH A MURDERED YOUNG GIRL IN ITS TRUNK.
AND I'LL NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN.
YOU'LL SEE ME AGAIN. I'M GOING TO KILL EVERY ONE OF YOU.
HE'S ALL YOURS, MAXINE.

I HOPE YOU REALIZE YOU'VE BROKEN MY HEART
GORDO PUSH CAR NOW?
NOT YET, GORDO LET MAXINE DO HER JOB.
THUNK
NOW, GORDO. PUSH CAR.

GORDO PUSH CAR.



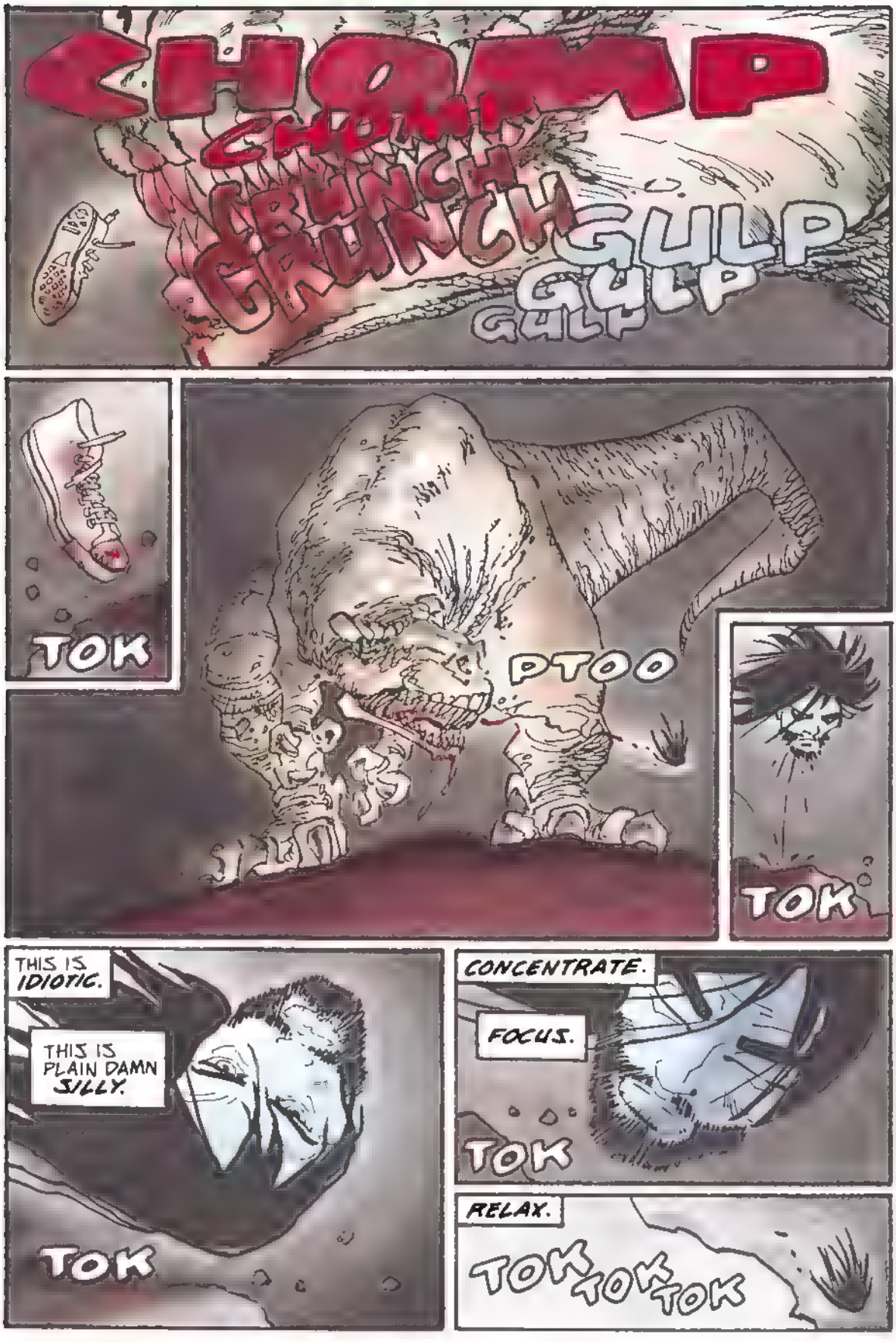
EEE
THIS IS RIDICULOUS.
THIS IS INSANE.
EEE
THIS ISN'T HAPPENING.
BOOM!

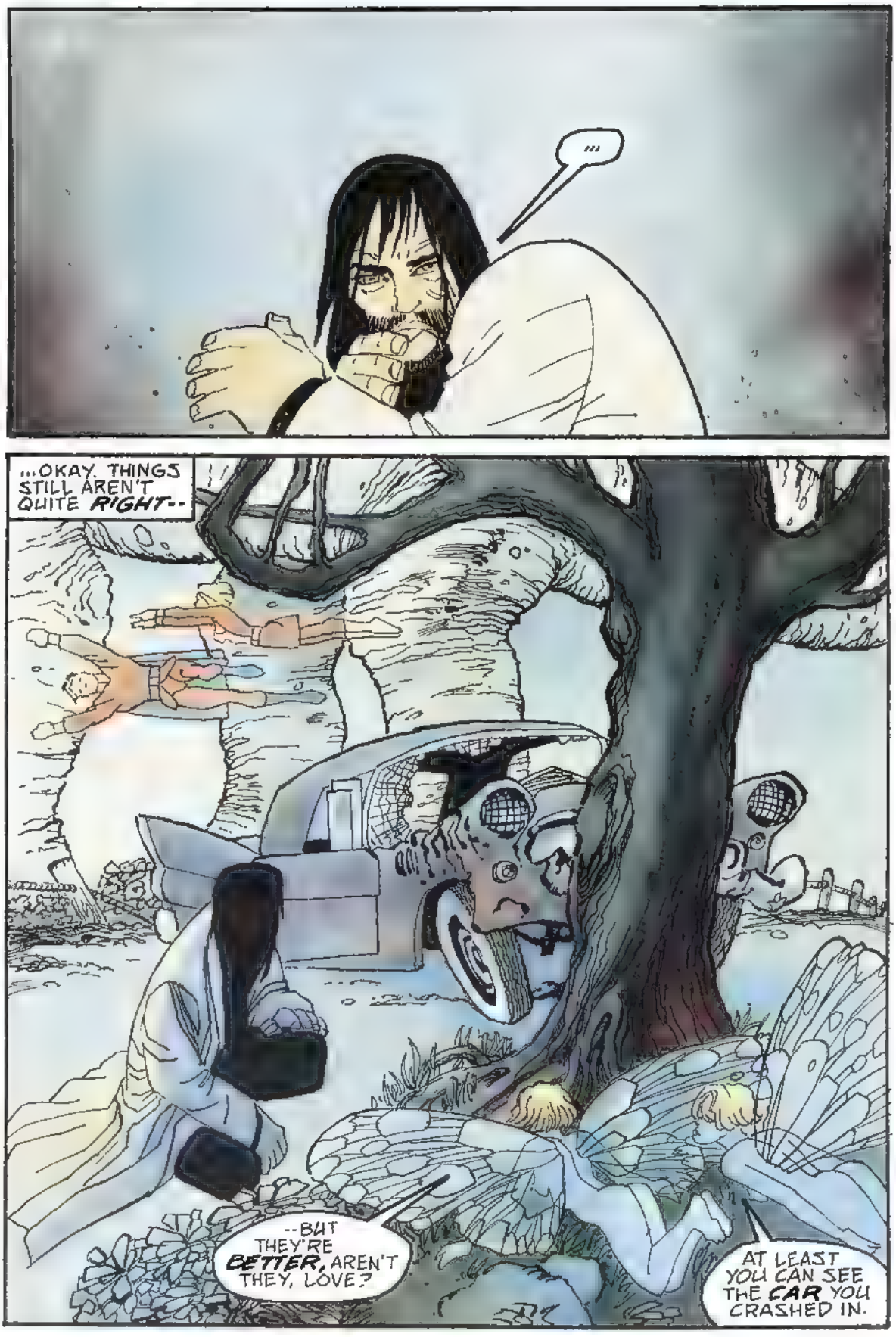

WHOOF!
AAARR
THUNK THUNK THUNK
YOU ARE SO SCREWED.
YEESH WHAT A LOSER.
YOU BROUGHT THIS ON YOURSELF, YOU STUPID DICK.
THIS IS NONSENSE. THIS IS CRAZY.
THIS ISN'T HAPPENING.
COME ON, FELLAS! THIS GUY'S A TOTAL ASSHOLE!

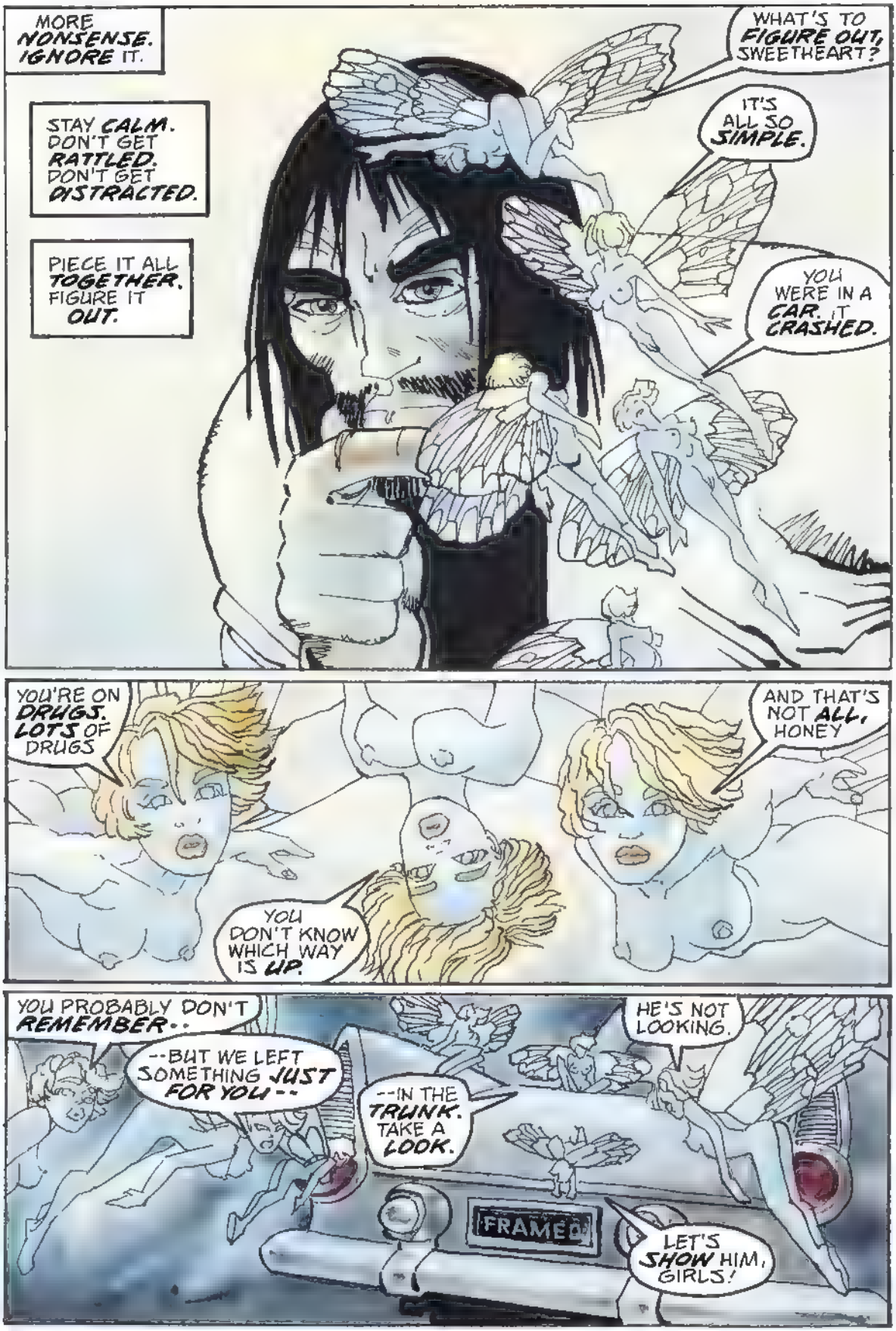
YOU EVER WONDER ABOUT US CHERUBS? I MEAN, WHAT GIVES?
WHAT ARE WE, BABY ANGELS? OR ARE WE JUST DEAD BABIES?
HELL OF A SYMBOL FOR LOVE, IF YOU ASK ME.
THIS IS ABSURD. THIS IS MADNESS. THIS ISN'T HAPPENING.
IT'S THE DRUGS. THE ENEMY PUMPED ME FULL OF DRUGS. I'M HALLUCINATING.
FIGHT IT. CONCENTRATE. FOCUS. YOU HAVE TO. YOU HAVE TO
ESTHER NEEDS YOU.
ESTHER'S DEAD AS HELL, YOU DUMB OLD TURO.
SST

DON'T LISTEN. FOCUS. CONCENTRATE. RELAX.
YOU CAN DO IT.
YOU THINK YOU CAN MEDITATE YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS? RIGHT. SURE. TRUST THE GODDAMN FORCE, LUKE.
YOU ARE SUCH A PHTZ.
...
FOOLED YOU
RRR

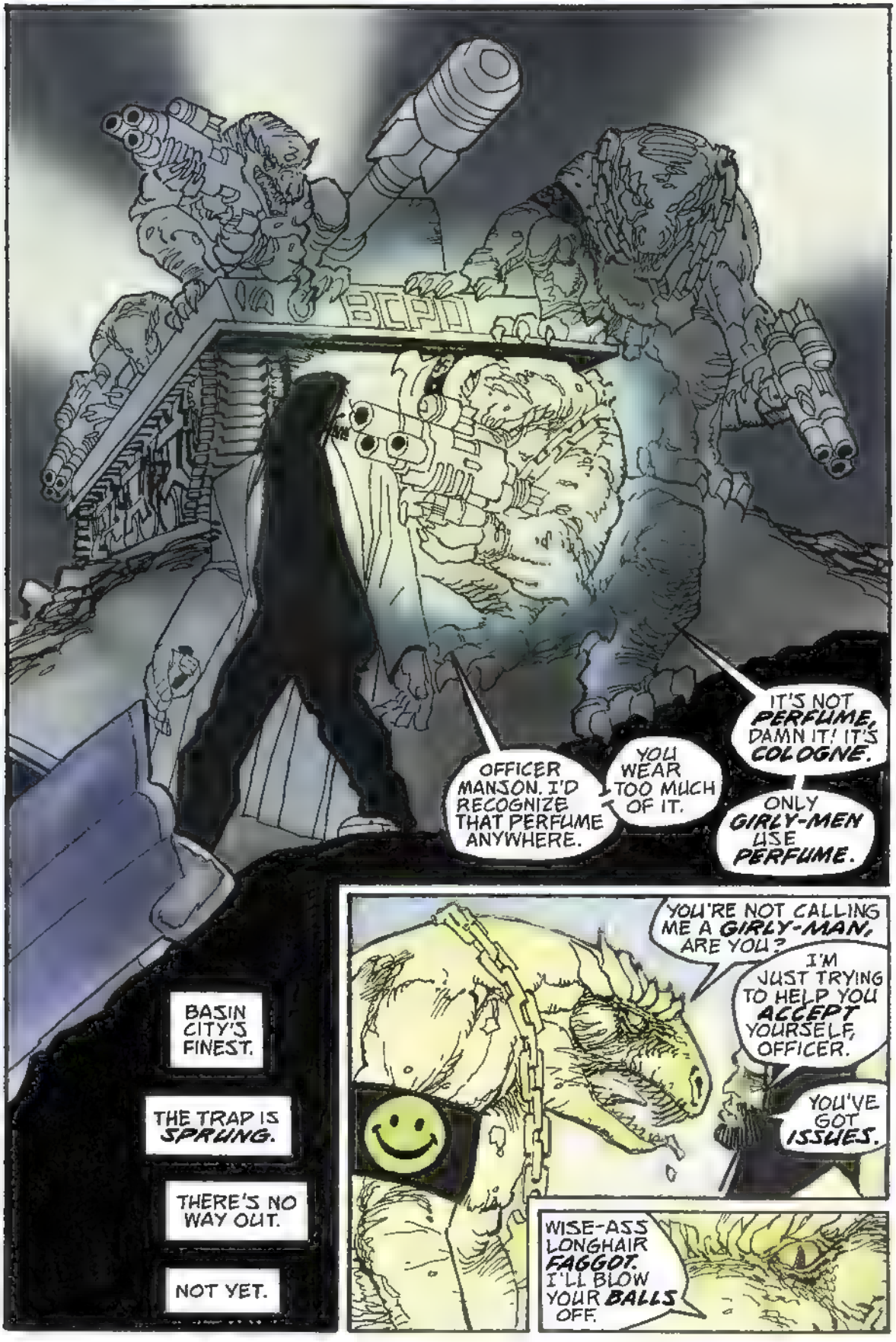
RAAR
YAA
KRUNCH
CHOMP

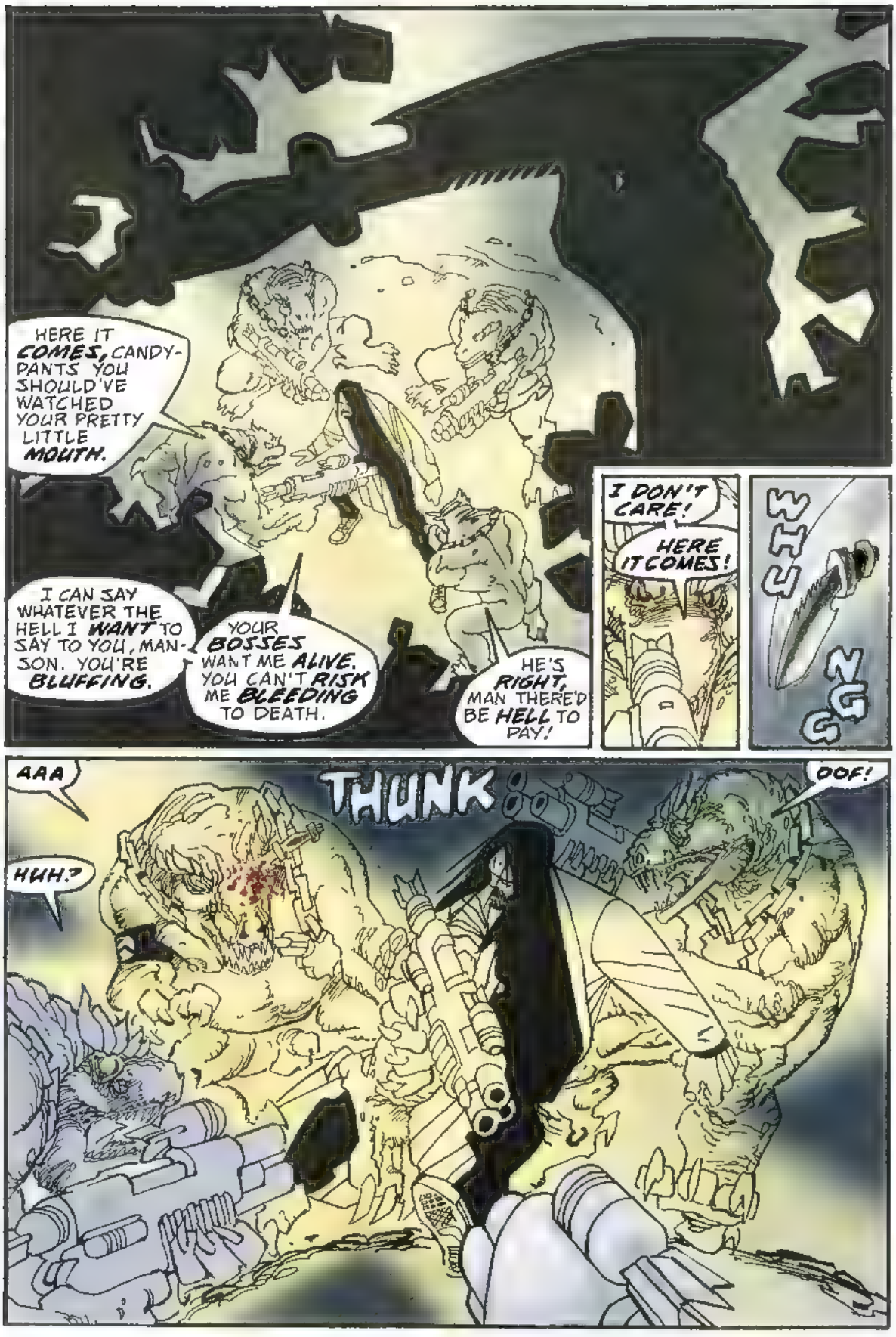

CHOMP
CHOMP
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
GULP
GULP
GULP
TOK
PTOO
TOK
THIS IS IDIOTIC.
THIS IS PLAIN DAMN SILLY.
TOK
CONCENTRATE.
FOCUS.
TOK
RELAX.
TOK TOK TOK

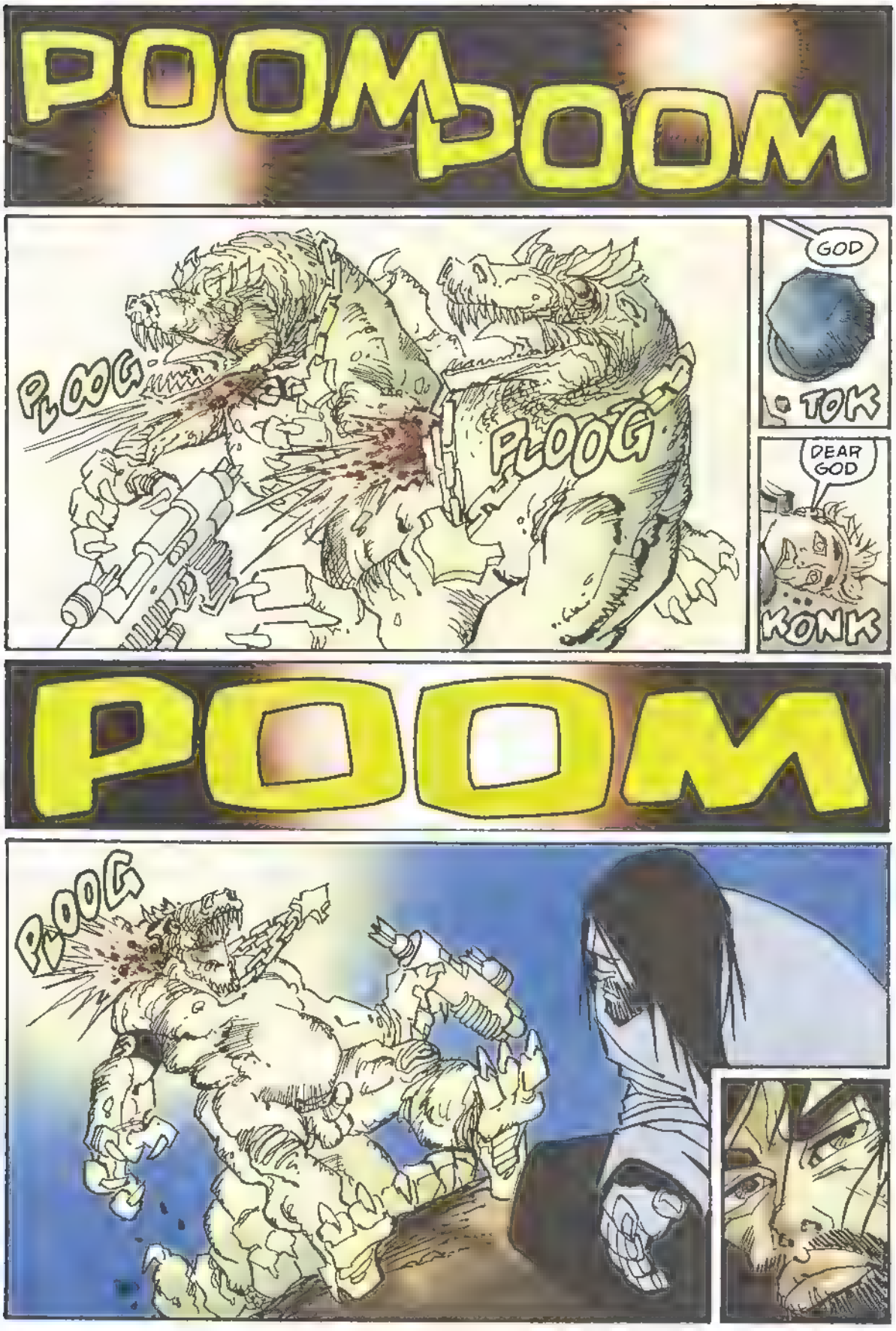

...
...OKAY. THINGS STILL AREN'T QUITE RIGHT--
--BUT THEY'RE BETTER, AREN'T THEY, LOVE?
AT LEAST YOU CAN SEE THE CAR YOU CRASHED IN.

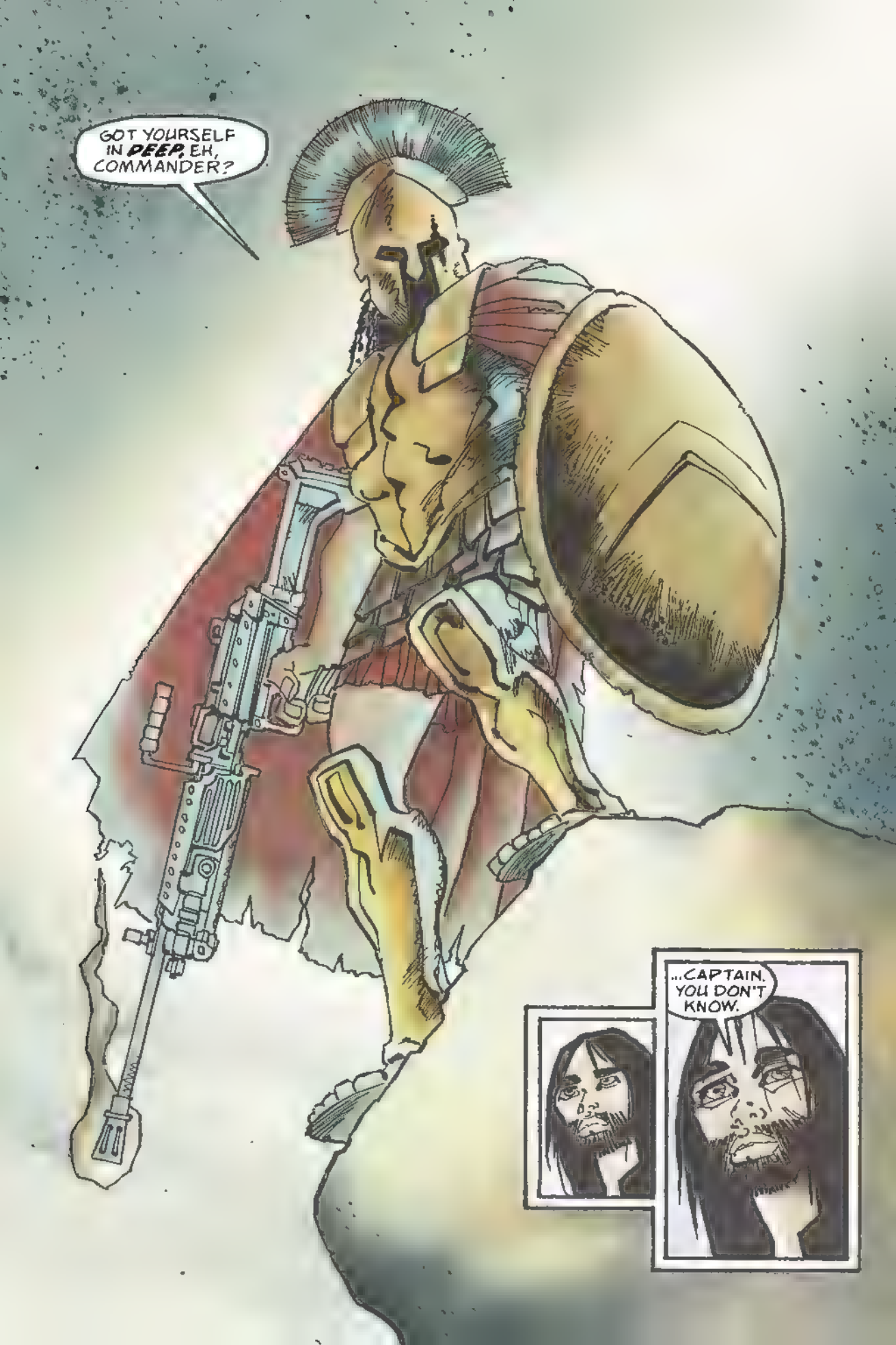

MORE NONSENSE. IGNORE IT.
STAY CALM. DON'T GET RATTLED. DON'T GET DISTRACTED.
PIECE IT ALL TOGETHER. FIGURE IT OUT.
WHAT'S TO FIGURE OUT, SWEETHEART?
IT'S ALL SO SIMPLE.
YOU WERE IN A CAR. IT CRASHED.
YOU'RE ON DRUGS. LOTS OF DRUGS
AND THAT'S NOT ALL, HONEY
YOU DON'T KNOW WHICH WAY IS UP.
YOU PROBABLY DON'T REMEMBER..
--BUT WE LEFT SOMETHING JUST FOR YOU--
--IN THE TRUNK. TAKE A LOOK.
HE'S NOT LOOKING.
FRAMED
LET'S SHOW HIM, GIRLS!

HUT!
HUT!
HUT!
HUT!
CHECK IT OUT, BABY. THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE.
ACTUALLY, IT WON'T. QUITE THE OPPOSITE.
BUT IT'S A NICE SAYING.
THERE SHE IS...
AW. POOR LITTLE THING.
SHE CAN'T BE MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS OLD.
FAIR TO BREAK YOUR HEART.
JUST THIS ONCE, I'M GRATEFUL FOR THE DRUGS.
SCREECH
UH-OH!
WE'D BETTER SCOOT, GIRLS!

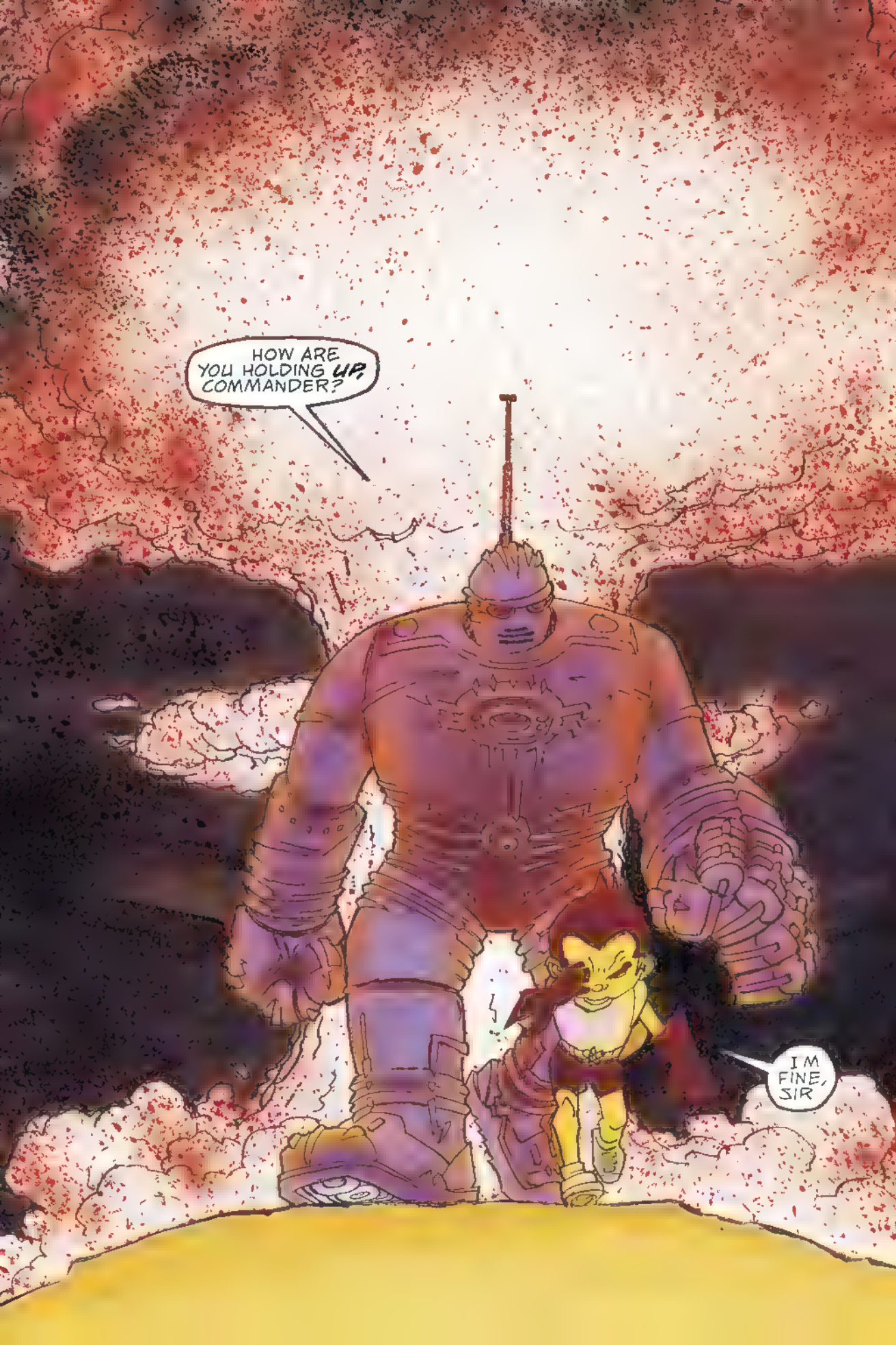

BCPD
OFFICER MANSON. I'D RECOGNIZE THAT PERFUME ANYWHERE.
YOU WEAR TOO MUCH OF IT.
IT'S NOT PERFUME, DAMN IT! IT'S COLOGNE.
ONLY GIRLY-MEN USE PERFUME.
BASIN CITY'S FINEST.
THE TRAP IS SPRUNG.
THERE'S NO WAY OUT.
NOT YET.
YOU'RE NOT CALLING ME A GIRLY-MAN, ARE YOU?
I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP YOU ACCEPT YOURSELF, OFFICER.
YOU'VE GOT ISSUES.
WISE-ASS LONGHAIR FAGGOT. I'LL BLOW YOUR BALLS OFF.

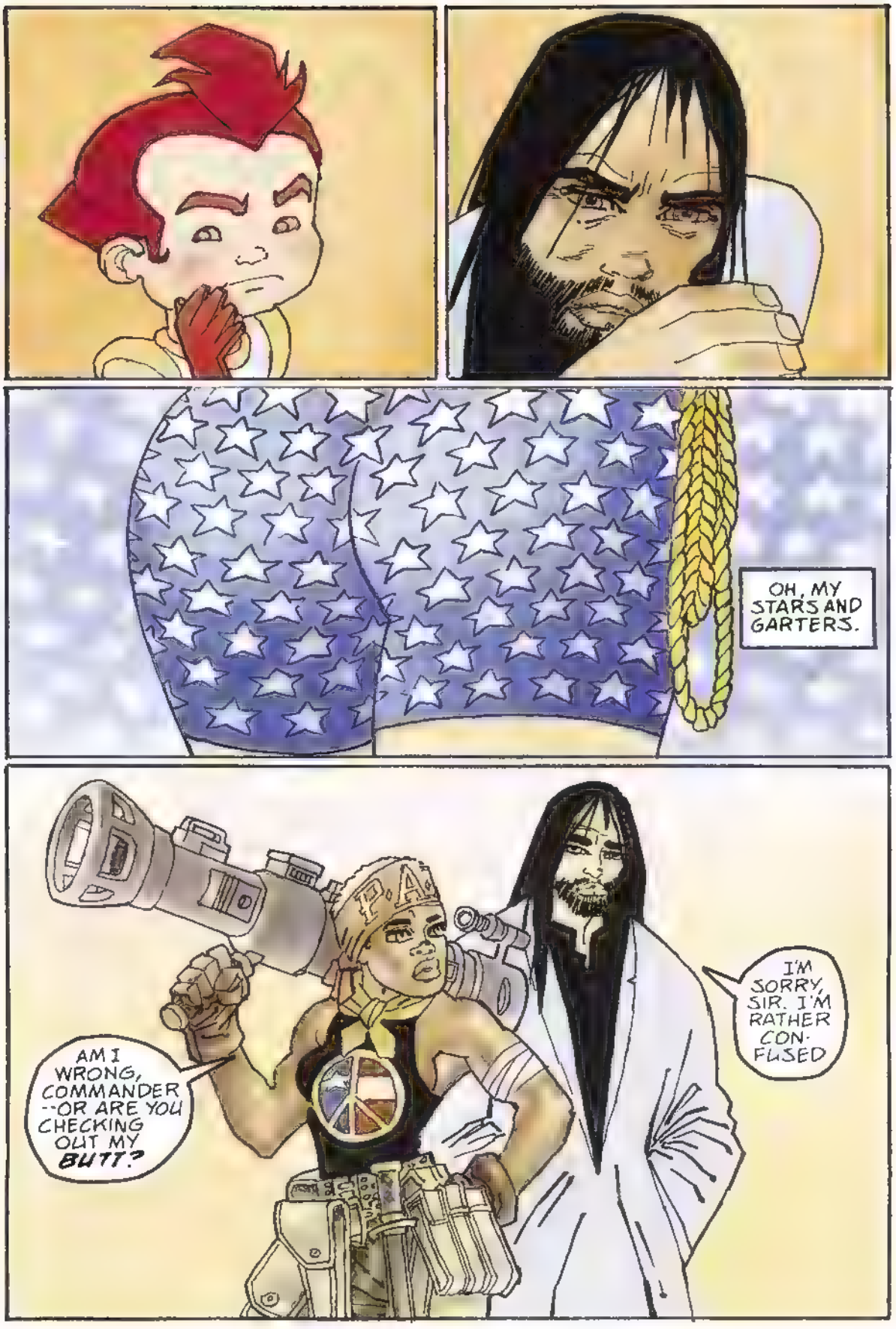

HERE IT COMES, CANDY-PANTS YOU SHOULD'VE WATCHED YOUR PRETTY LITTLE MOUTH.
I CAN SAY WHATEVER THE HELL I WANT TO SAY TO YOU, MANSON. YOU'RE BLUFFING.
YOUR BOSSES WANT ME ALIVE. YOU CAN'T RISK ME BLEEDING TO DEATH.
HE'S RIGHT, MAN THERE'D BE HELL TO PAY!
I DON'T CARE!
HERE IT COMES!
WHUNG
AAA
HUH?
THUNK
OOF!


POOM POOM
PLOOG
PLOOG
GOD
TOK
DEAR GOD
KONK
POOM
PLOOG

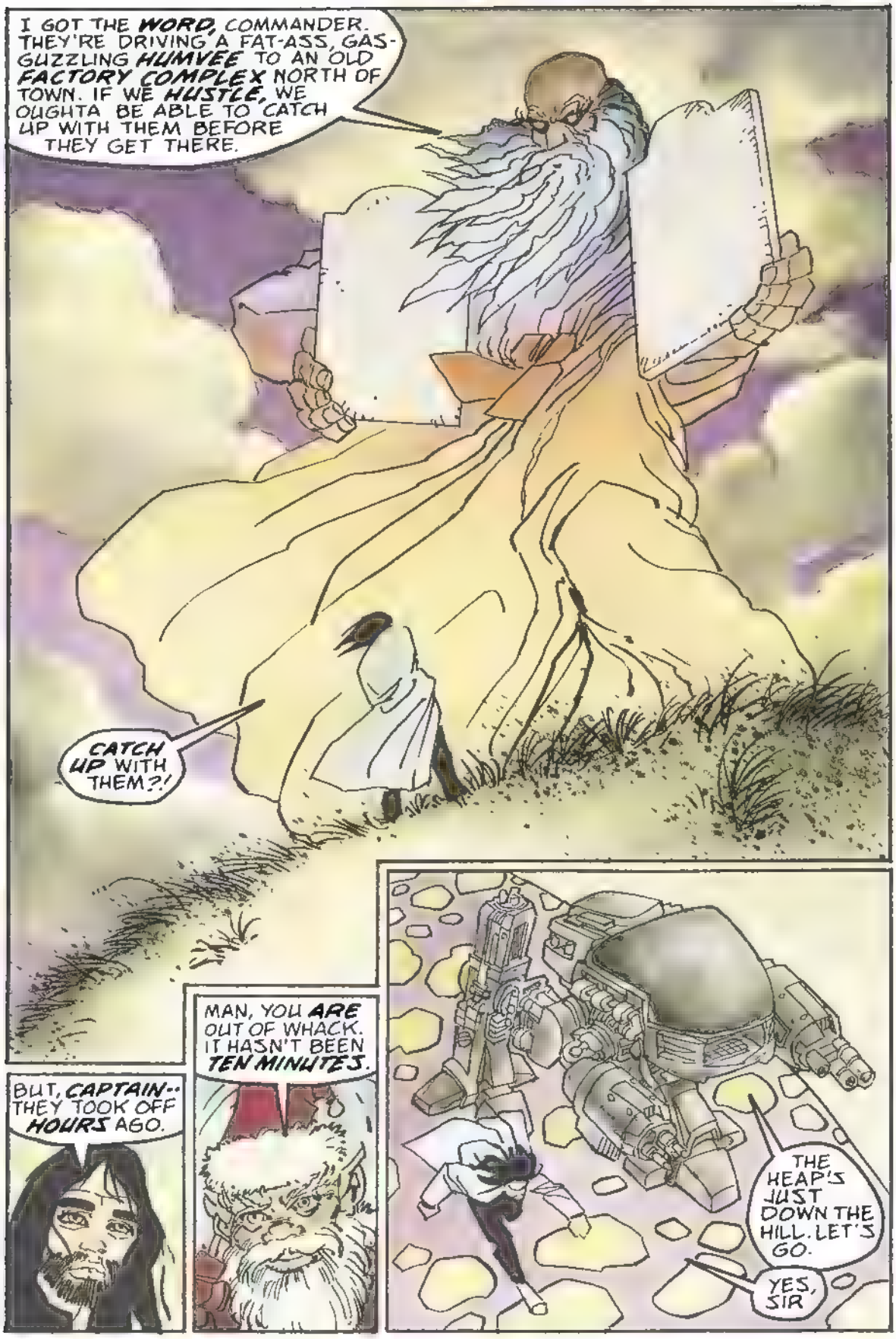

GOT YOURSELF IN DEEP, EH, COMMANDER?
...CAPTAIN. YOU DON'T KNOW.

I'D HAVE GOTTEN HERE SOONER, BUT THEY'D ESTABLISHED A PERIMETER. NINE MEN. THEY TOOK A WHILE
SO HOW'D YOU MAKE ALL THESE NEW FRIENDS?
A WOMAN WAS KIDNAPPED I'M LOOKING FOR HER. A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO STOP ME.
THEY DOPED ME UP I'M HALLUCINATING.
THEN THE FIRST THING WE GOTTA DO IS GET YOU STRAIGHT.
THAT MEANS TAKING YOU TO A HOSPITAL AND WASTING TIME ANSWERING A BUNCH OF FOOL QUESTIONS --
--OR GETTING OUR HANDS ON WHOEVER FRIED YOUR BRAIN.
I LEFT ONE OF THEIR SNIPERS ALIVE ENOUGH TO POINT US IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. LET'S GO HAVE A CHAT WITH HIM.
YES, SIR

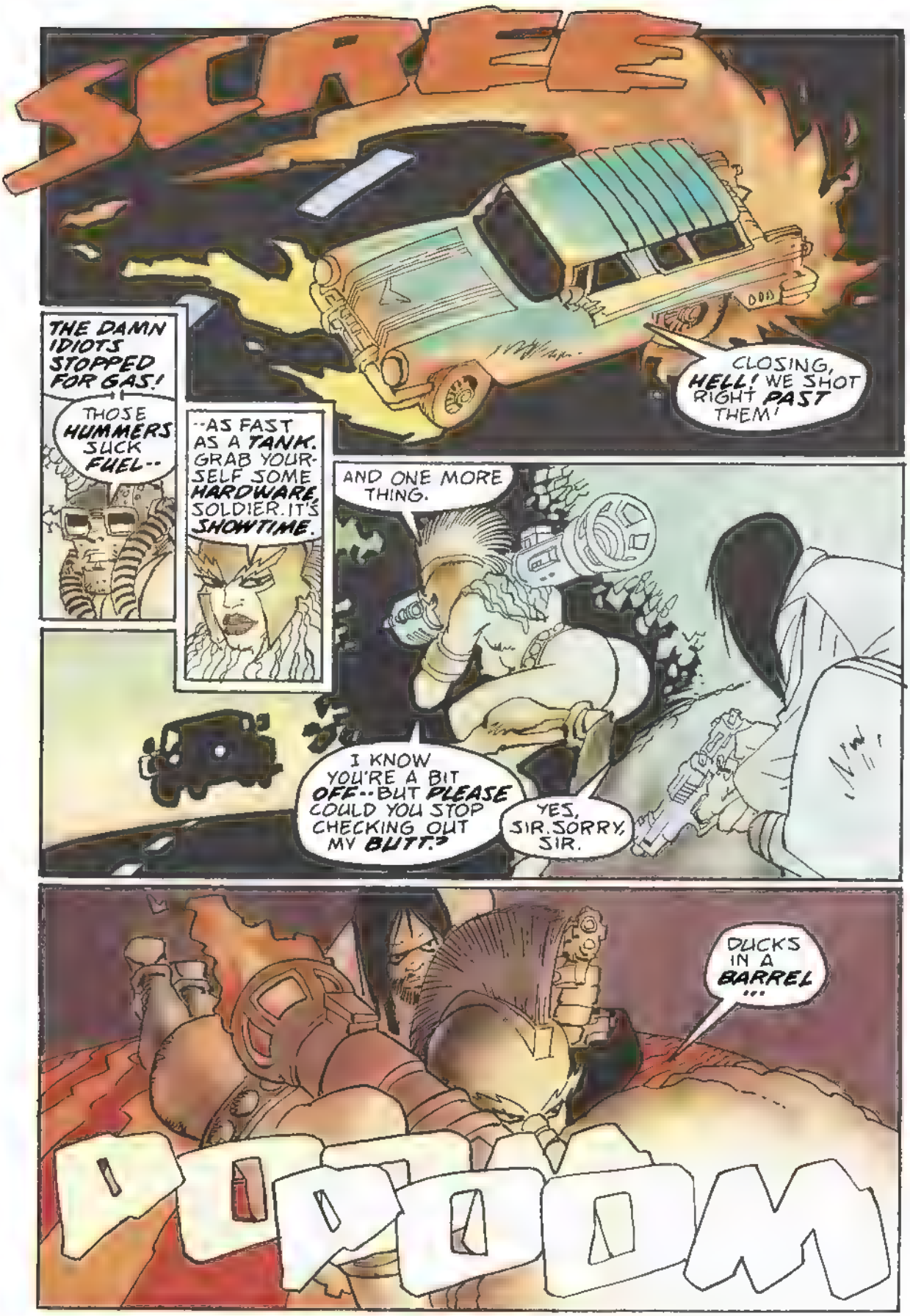

HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP, COMMANDER?
I'M FINE, SIR

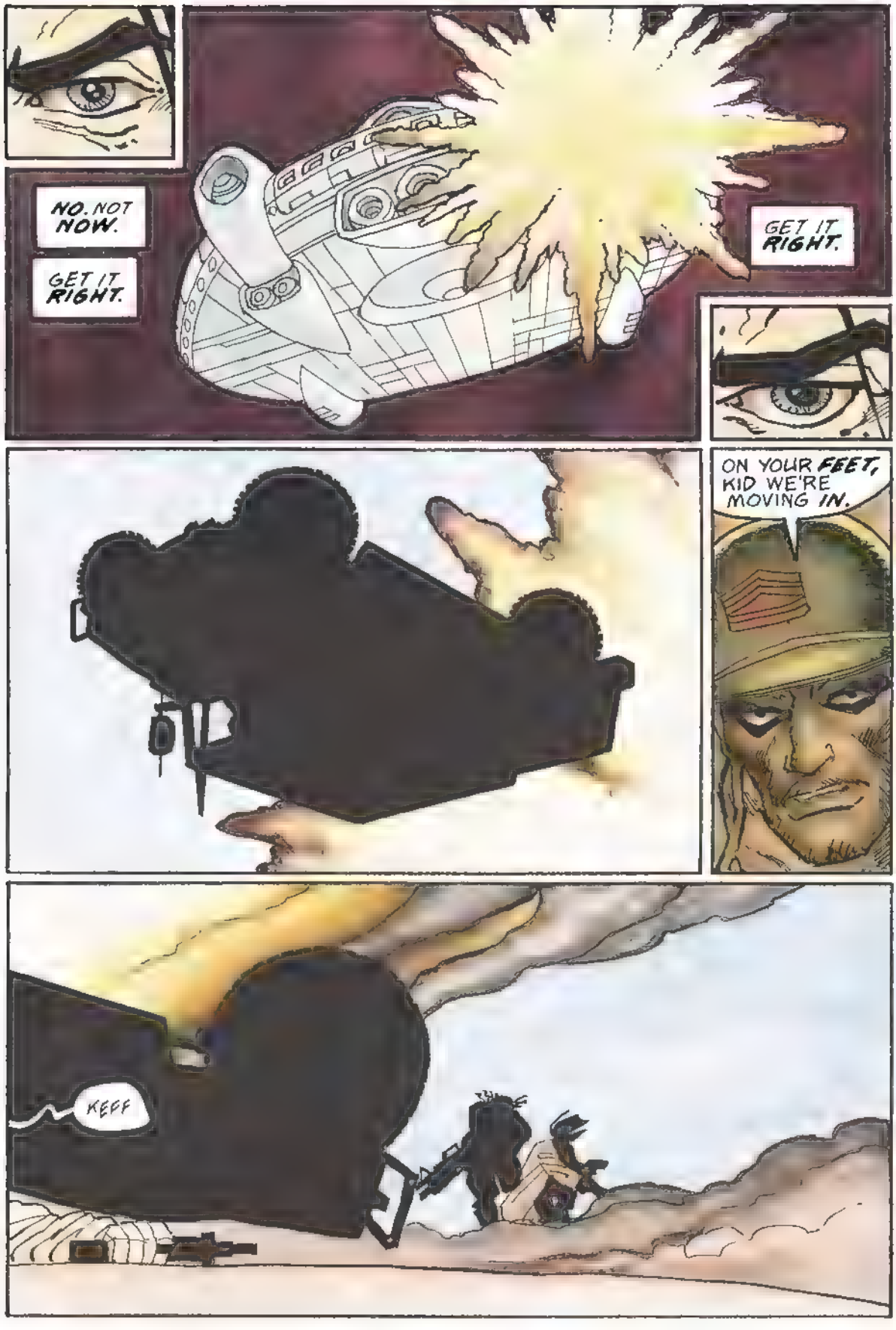

OH, MY STARS AND GARTERS.
AM I WRONG, COMMANDER --OR ARE YOU CHECKING OUT MY BUTT?
I'M SORRY, SIR. I'M RATHER CONFUSED

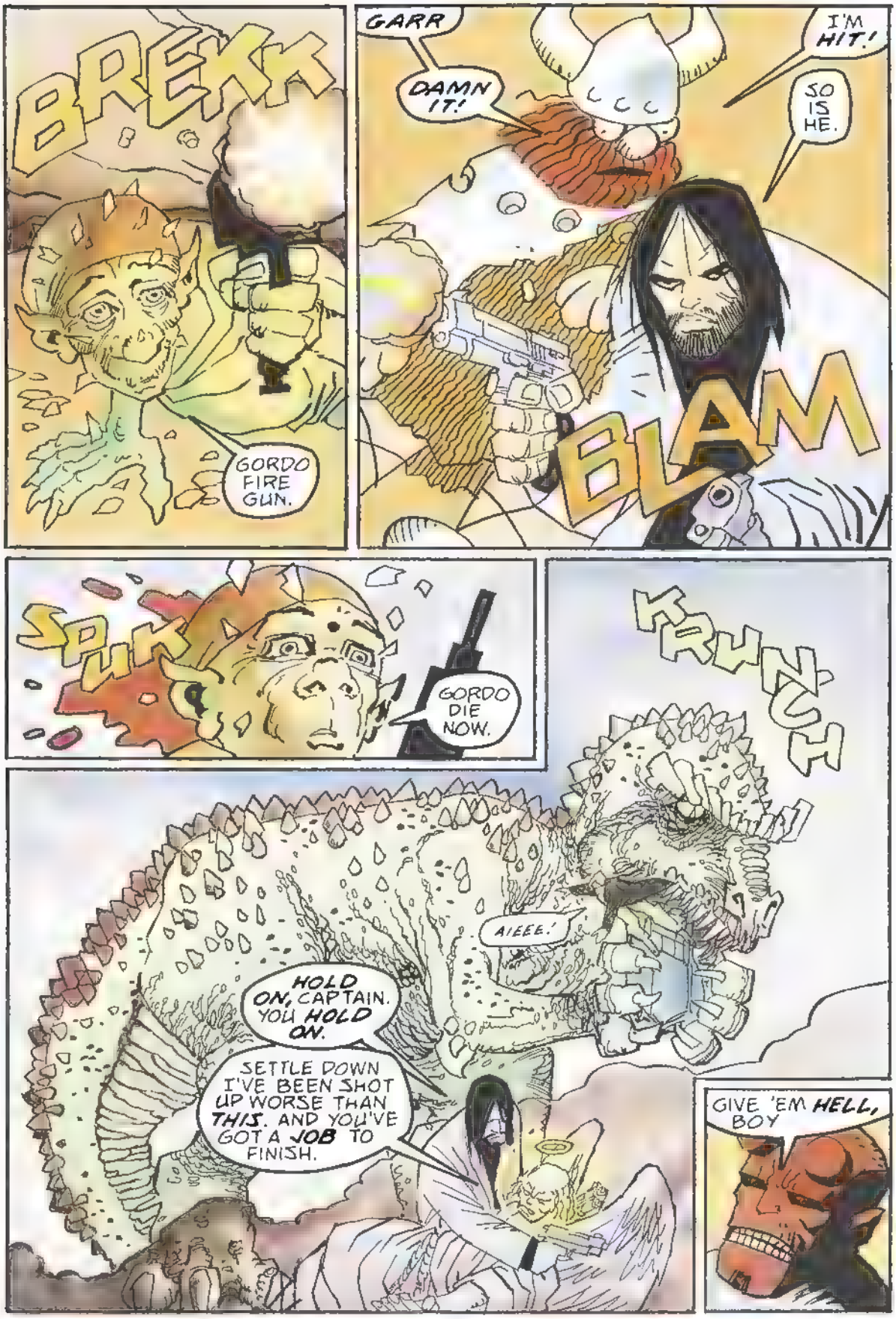
NO SWEAT. WE'RE ALL LIBERALS HERE JUST DON'T LET IT GET TOO GOOD TO YOU
SIT TIGHT WHILE I GET THIS CLOWN TALKING.
MMF
THPP
I WON'T BE LONG.
BREATHE DEEP. FOCUS. CONCENTRATE. GET STRAIGHT. GET CLEAR. YOU CAN DO IT. YOU CAN.
IT'S YOUR MIND. YOU CAN DO IT.
BOOM

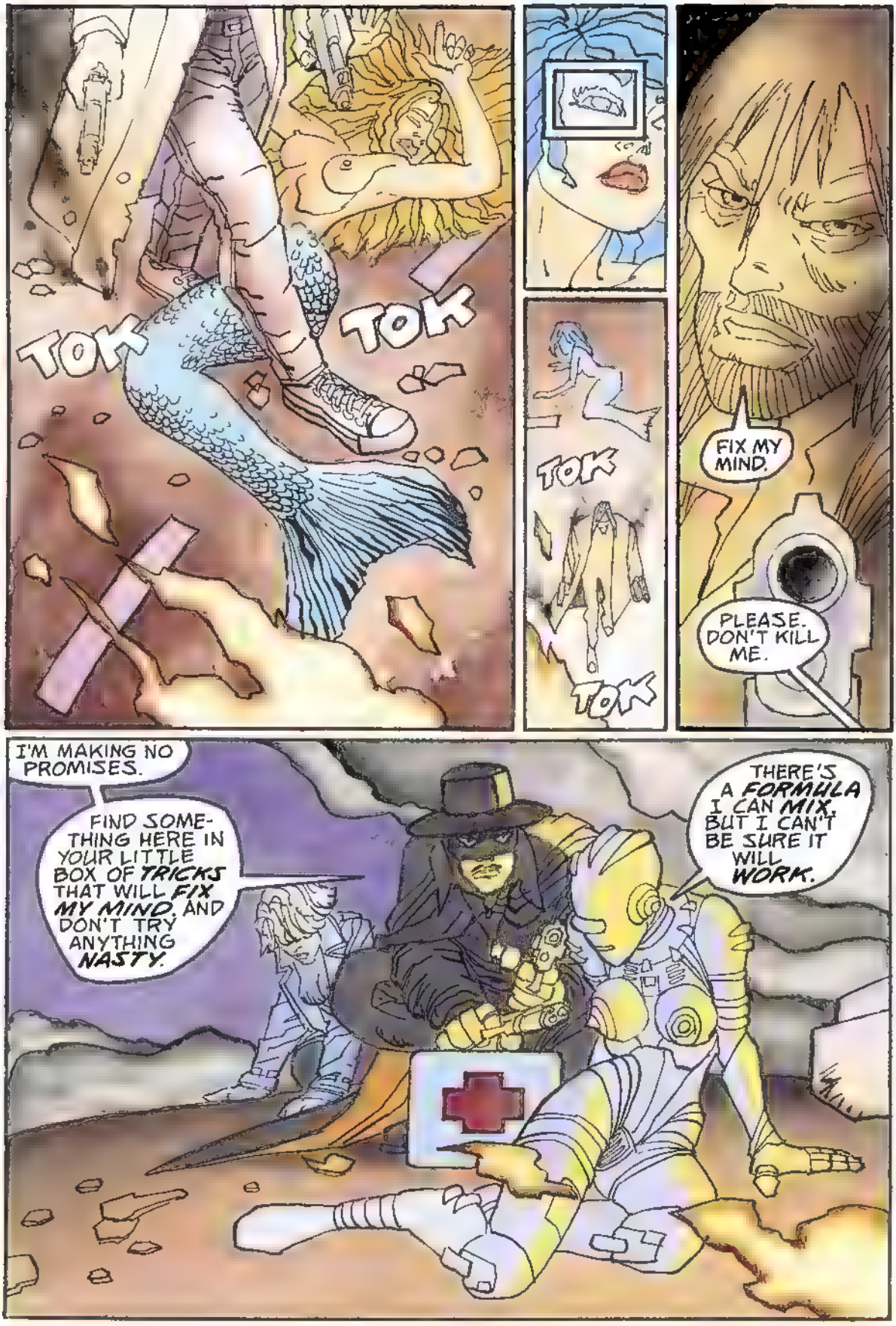

I GOT THE WORD, COMMANDER. THEY'RE DRIVING A FAT-ASS, GAS-GUZZLING HUMVEE TO AN OLD FACTORY COMPLEX NORTH OF TOWN. IF WE HUSTLE, WE OUGHTA BE ABLE TO CATCH UP WITH THEM BEFORE THEY GET THERE.
CATCH UP WITH THEM?!
THE HEAP'S JUST DOWN THE HILL. LET'S GO.
YES, SIR
MAN, YOU ARE OUT OF WHACK. IT HASN'T BEEN TEN MINUTES.
BUT, CAPTAIN.. THEY TOOK OFF HOURS AGO.

YOU'RE LOOKING KIND OF GREEN AROUND THE GILLS, COMMANDER. YOU'RE NOT GONNA BLOW CHUNKS IN MY CAR, ARE YOU?
NO, SIR. I'LL BE FINE.
GOD DAMN! DID YOU SEE THAT?
I'M SEEING A GREAT MANY THINGS, CAPTAIN. CLUE ME IN. ARE WE CLOSING ON THEM?


SCREE
CLOSING, HELL! WE SHOT RIGHT PAST THEM!
THE DAMN IDIOTS STOPPED FOR GAS!
THOSE HUMMERS SUCK FUEL--
--AS FAST AS A TANK. GRAB YOURSELF SOME HARDWARE, SOLDIER. IT'S SHOWTIME.
AND ONE MORE THING.
I KNOW YOU'RE A BIT OFF--BUT PLEASE COULD YOU STOP CHECKING OUT MY BUTT?
YES, SIR. SORRY, SIR.
DUCKS IN A BARREL...
DOOM


NO. NOT NOW.
GET IT RIGHT.
GET IT RIGHT.
ON YOUR FEET, KID WE'RE MOVING IN.
KEFF

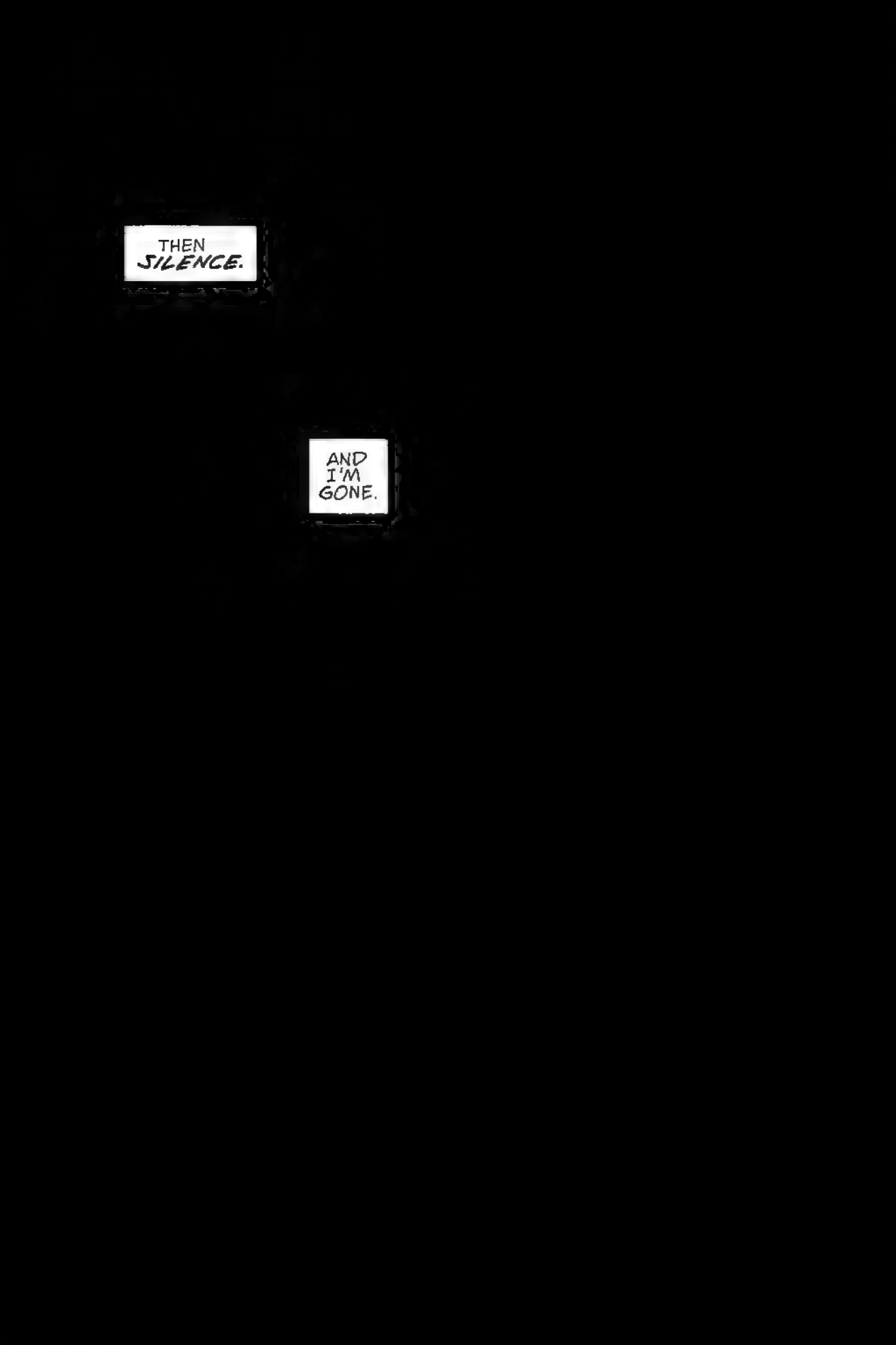

BREKK
GORDO FIRE GUN.
GARR
DAMN IT!
I'M HIT!
SO IS HE.
BLAM
SPUK
GORDO DIE NOW.
KRUNCH
AIEEE!
HOLD ON, CAPTAIN. YOU HOLD ON.
SETTLE DOWN I'VE BEEN SHOT UP WORSE THAN THIS. AND YOU'VE GOT A JOB TO FINISH.
GIVE 'EM HELL, BOY


TOK
TOK
TOK
TOK
FIX MY MIND.
PLEASE. DON'T KILL ME.
I'M MAKING NO PROMISES.
FIND SOMETHING HERE IN YOUR LITTLE BOX OF TRICKS THAT WILL FIX MY MIND, AND DON'T TRY ANYTHING NASTY.
THERE'S A FORMULA I CAN MIX, BUT I CAN'T BE SURE IT WILL WORK.

BE SURE
DROP IT, DELIA
IT'S ALMOST SET...
YES, BOSS
I'LL BE GOOD.
HERE WE GO. GIVE IT A FEW MOMENTS...
MY STOMACH LURCHES.
BILE CLIMBS MY THROAT.
I GO BLIND.
HWKK
PLEASE ...GIVE IT TIME...

TWIN SHOCKS UP MY ARMS.

TWIN THUNDERCLAPS.


THEN
SILENCE.
AND
I'M
GONE.

NGG
I'M ALMOST AFRAID TO LOOK.
KEFF
MAXINE, YOU KEPT YOUR WORD, AFTER ALL.
YOU FIXED MY MIND.
THANKS.

I RISE, GERIATRIC.
I DON'T FALL DOWN.
I DON'T THROW UP.
MAXINE.
YOU FIXED MY MIND.
AND I BLEW YOUR BRAINS OUT.
THAT'S TOUGH.
THE GUNS ARE STILL HOT. IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW SECONDS.
THERE'S STILL TIME TO GET AWAY.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE IT--
--BUT THIS IS A FIRST FOR ME.
I'VE NEVER BEEN SHOT BEFORE. BUT YOU SHOT ME GOOD, WALLACE. RIGHT THROUGH MY GUT.
IT'S NOT LIKE I EXPECTED. IT HURTS, SURE BUT IT'S WHAT I CAN'T FEEL THAT SCARES ME.
I CAN'T FEEL MY LEGS.
PLEASE HAVE MERCY.

I DO.
BLAM
SHE NEVER KNOWS WHAT HITS HER.
PROMISES MADE. PROMISES KEPT.
DELIA.
YOU STRANGE, SAD CREATURE.
GOODBYE

CAPTAIN. YOU LIED TO ME.
YOU TOLD ME YOU'D MAKE IT.
YOU'RE DEAD AS HELL.

LET'S GET YOU HOME

WE BEAR WITNESS

JERRY BIDS SILENT FAREWELL TO THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE

STILL NOT A WORD

JERRY--NOTHING I COULD SAY WOULD COVER IT...

TELL ME THERE WAS A GOOD ENOUGH REASON, COMMANDER TELL ME IT WAS WORTH IT

I BELIEVE IT WAS.

THEN I'M WITH YOU, SIR. WHATEVER I CAN DO.

I KNOW BUT I--

HUKK

STEADY, MAN. IT'S THE *DRUGS*.

HUKK HUKK

WHEN HE SEES THE CORPSE, JERRY DOESN'T SAY A WORD.

HE JUST GRABS AN AX AND STARTS CHOPPING WOOD

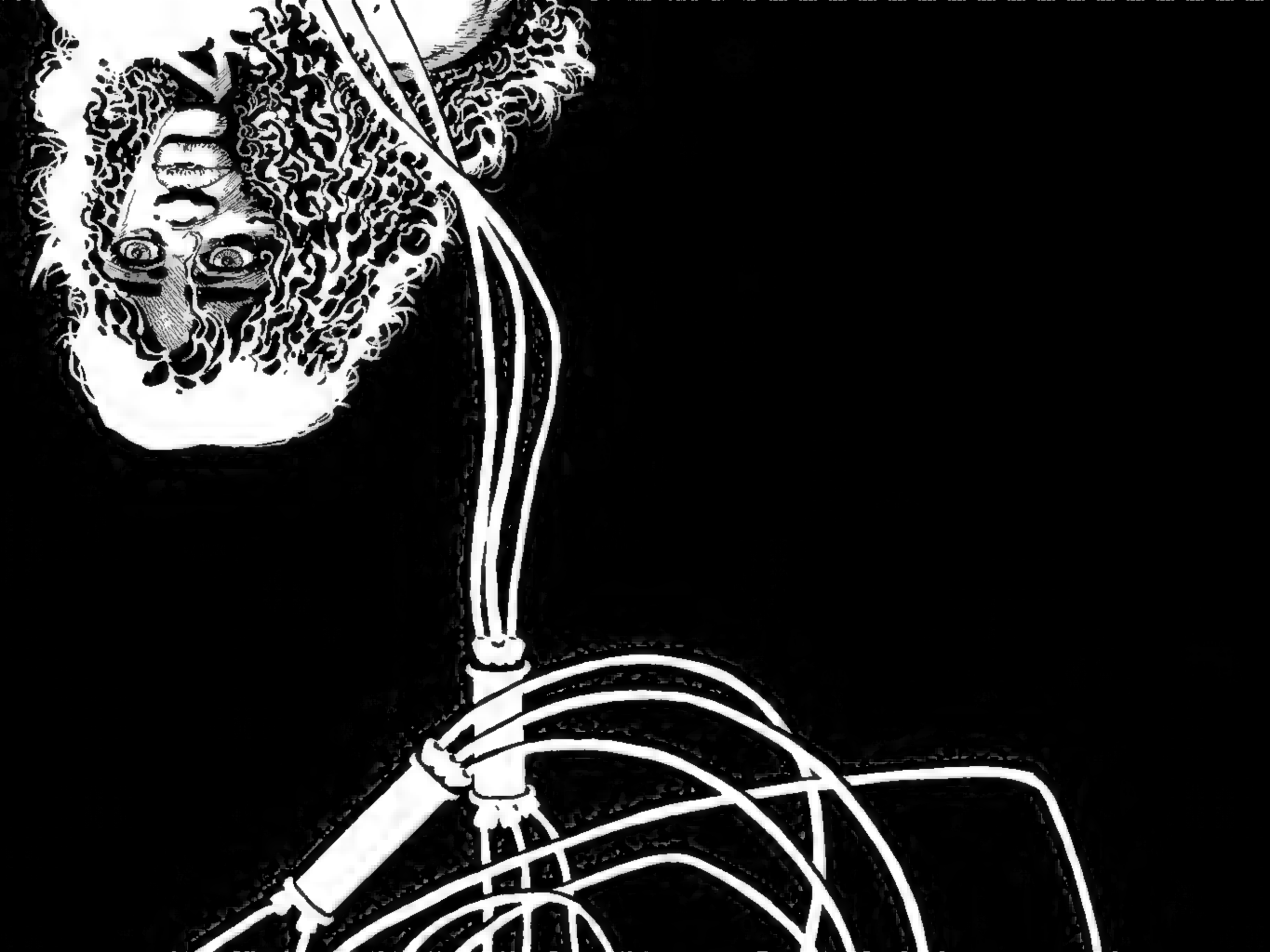
SOON, THE CAPTAIN BURNS.

FLASH

STEADY YOU'LL BE OKAY I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU

ESTHER. I'M *USELESS*.

I'M *USELESS*.

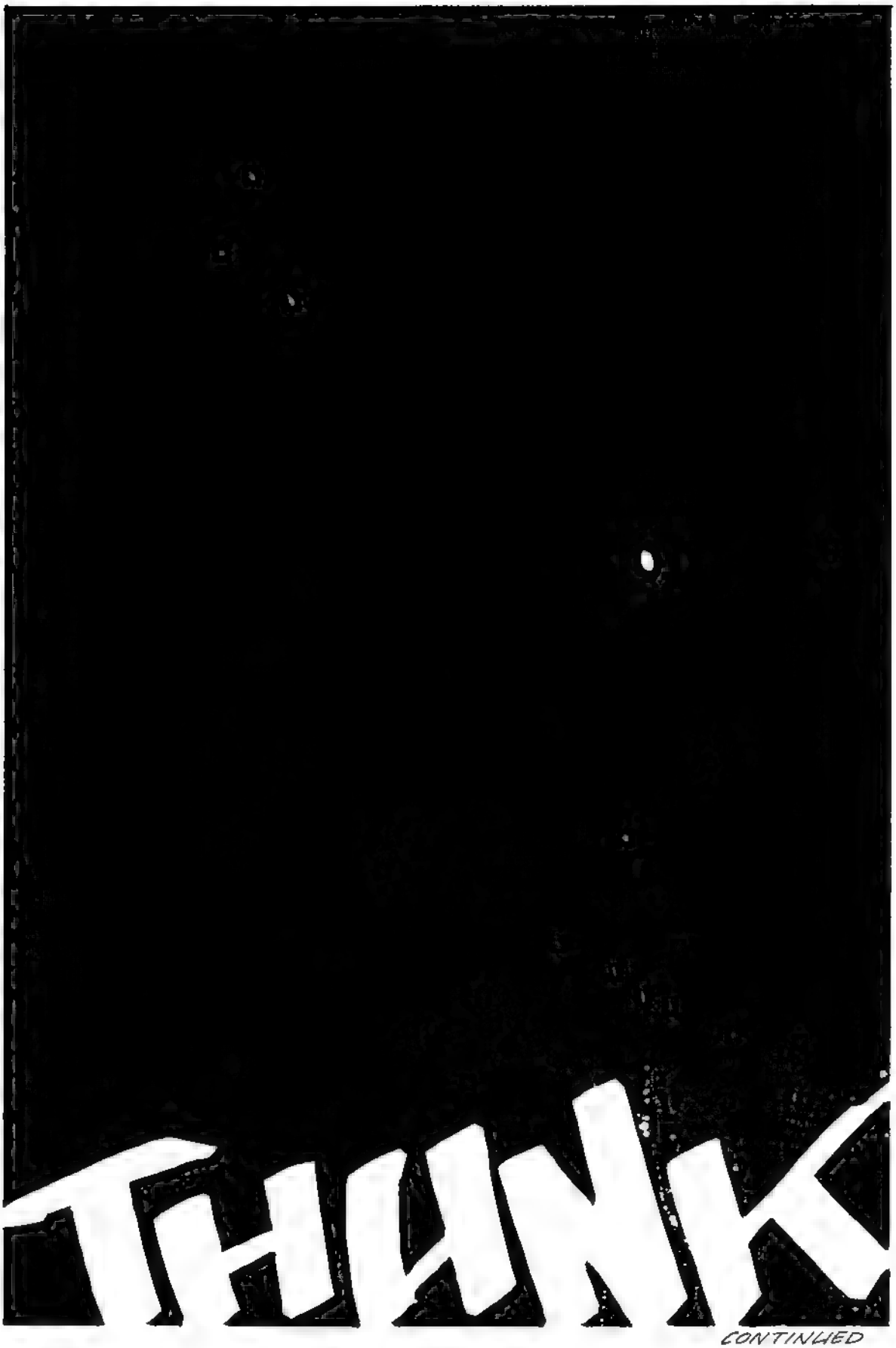


ESTHER. HOLD ON.
WHEREVER YOU ARE--WHATEVER THEY'RE DOING TO YOU--HOLD ON.
I'LL GET THROUGH THIS. I WILL.
HOLD ON.
HOLD ON.

UP AND AT 'EM, DOCTOR FREDRIC. RISE AND SHINE.
YOU'VE SLEPT PAST NOON. THAT'S NEVER A GOOD SIGN.
IT'S THOSE BAD HABITS OF YOURS. YOU'RE WASTING YOUR LIFE AWAY
MUH--MARIAH? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

COME TO THINK OF IT, I DIDN'T ASK. WHAT AM I DOING HERE, COLONEL?
PLEASE DON'T THINK YOU'RE BEING PUNISHED, DOCTOR. YOUR BREACH OF PROCEDURE WAS FORGIVEN.
THIS IS STRICTLY BUSINESS. RISK MANAGEMENT
ORRIN! MY GOD...
...I THINK I'M GONNA BE SICK...
BLARF
LISTEN TO HIM. BAD HABITS. NO DISCIPLINE.
PRECISELY MY POINT THIS MAN WALLACE HAS PROVEN HIMSELF FORMIDABLE. AND HE KNOWS YOUR FACE. HE MIGHT FIND YOU.
GIVEN YOUR PROCLIVITIES, WE ARE LESS THAN CONFIDENT IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL DISCRETION.
I'D NEVER SELL YOU OUT! NEVER!

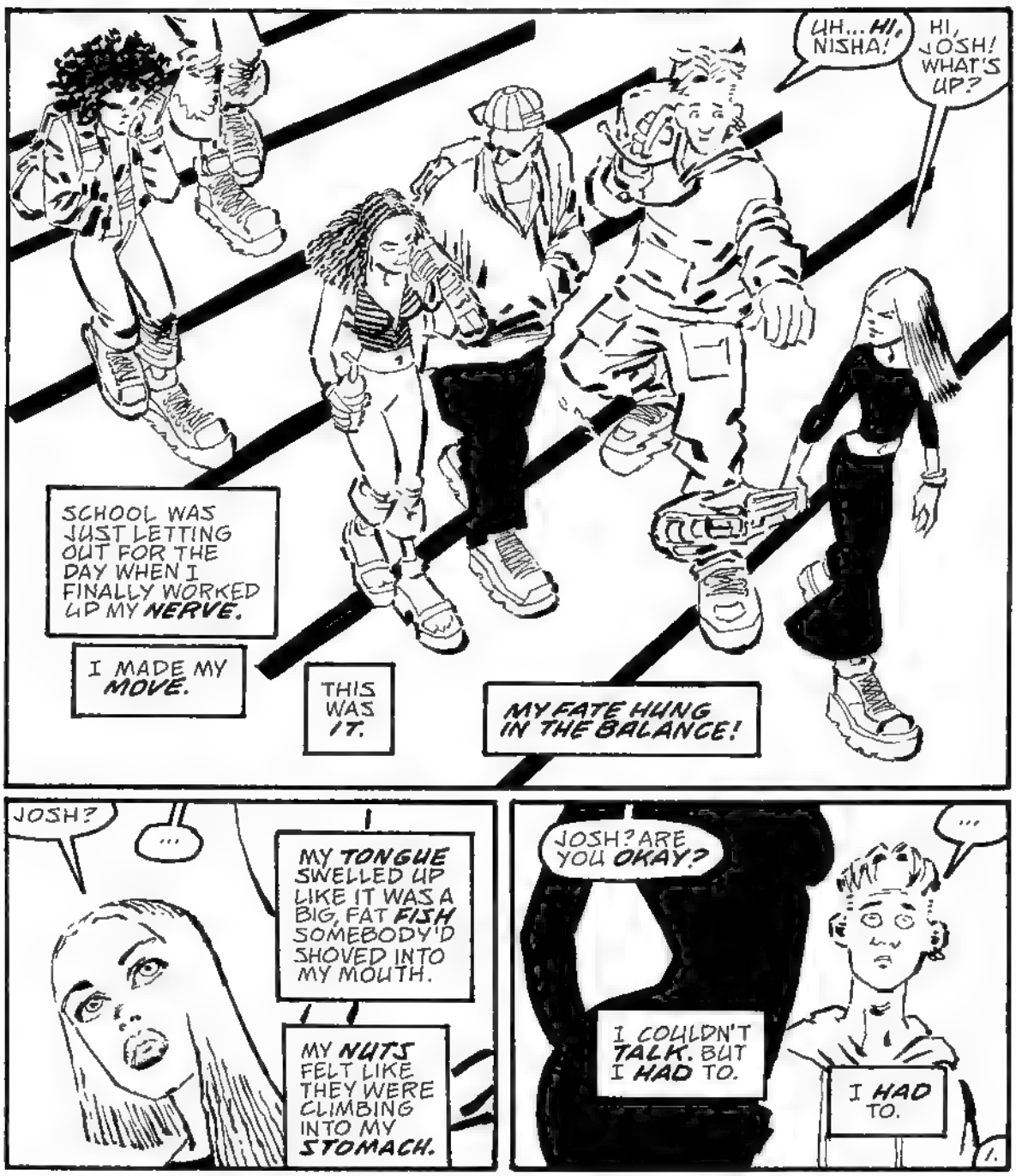
A JUNKIE'S PROMISE. UTTERLY SINCERE. UTTERLY WORTHLESS.
PICK UP THE PACE, MARIAH. THIS ISN'T OUR LAST STOP.
YES, SIR!
SNAP
MUH-- MUH-- MY GLASSES --I CAN BARELY SEE WITHOUT MUH-- MUH--
KRUNCH
OH...
BAD HABITS, DOCTOR FREDRIC
...YOU'LL SEE WELL ENOUGH.
THEY'LL BE THE DEATH OF YOU.
NO... NO! NOT THE EYE!
NOT THE EYE!


THUNK
CONTINUED

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO TALK TO YOU, DAD. ABOUT ANYTHING. AND I GOTTA TELL SOMEBODY WHAT HAPPENED. MOM WOULD KILL ME IF SHE FOUND OUT. AND THE GUYS--I'D NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT. I AM SUCH AN ASSHOLE! SO, ANYWAY, HERE IT IS. MY STORY. I GUESS I'D CALL IT...

MY BLIND DATE

A **SIN CITY** tale of woe


UH... HI, NISHA!
HI, JOSH! WHAT'S UP?
SCHOOL WAS JUST LETTING OUT FOR THE DAY WHEN I FINALLY WORKED UP MY NERVE.
I MADE MY MOVE.
THIS WAS IT.
MY FATE HUNG IN THE BALANCE!
JOSH?
...
MY TONGUE SWELLED UP LIKE IT WAS A BIG, FAT FISH SOMEBODY'D SHOVED INTO MY MOUTH.
MY NUTS FELT LIKE THEY WERE CLIMBING INTO MY STOMACH.
JOSH? ARE YOU OKAY?
...
I COULDN'T TALK. BUT I HAD TO.
I HAD TO.

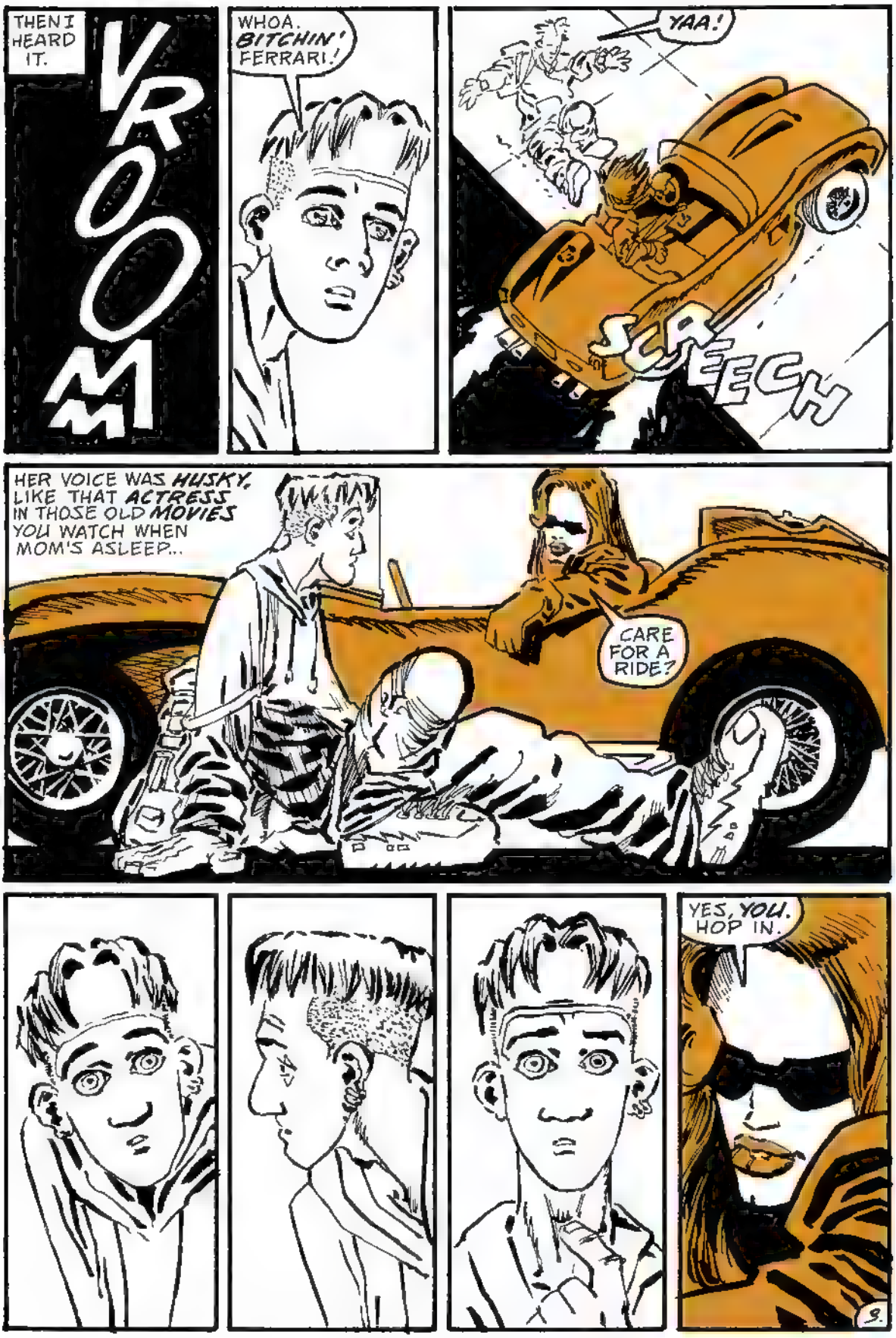
AND I DIDN'T WUSS OUT, DAD. I DID JUST LIKE YOU TOLD ME TO DO. I SUCKED IT UP AND CHARGED AHEAD--AND WENT AND MADE AN ASS OF MYSELF...
YEAH. I'M. UM. FINE. I WAS JUST. Y'KNOW. WONDERING IF MAYBE LIKE IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE. Y'KNOW. ANYTHING TO DO LIKE OVER THE WEEKEND YOU MIGHT WANNA LIKE. I DON'T KNOW. GO SEE A MOVIE OR SOMETHING. JUST AN IDEA.
AW, JOSH ...
... YOU'RE A REALLY NICE GUY...

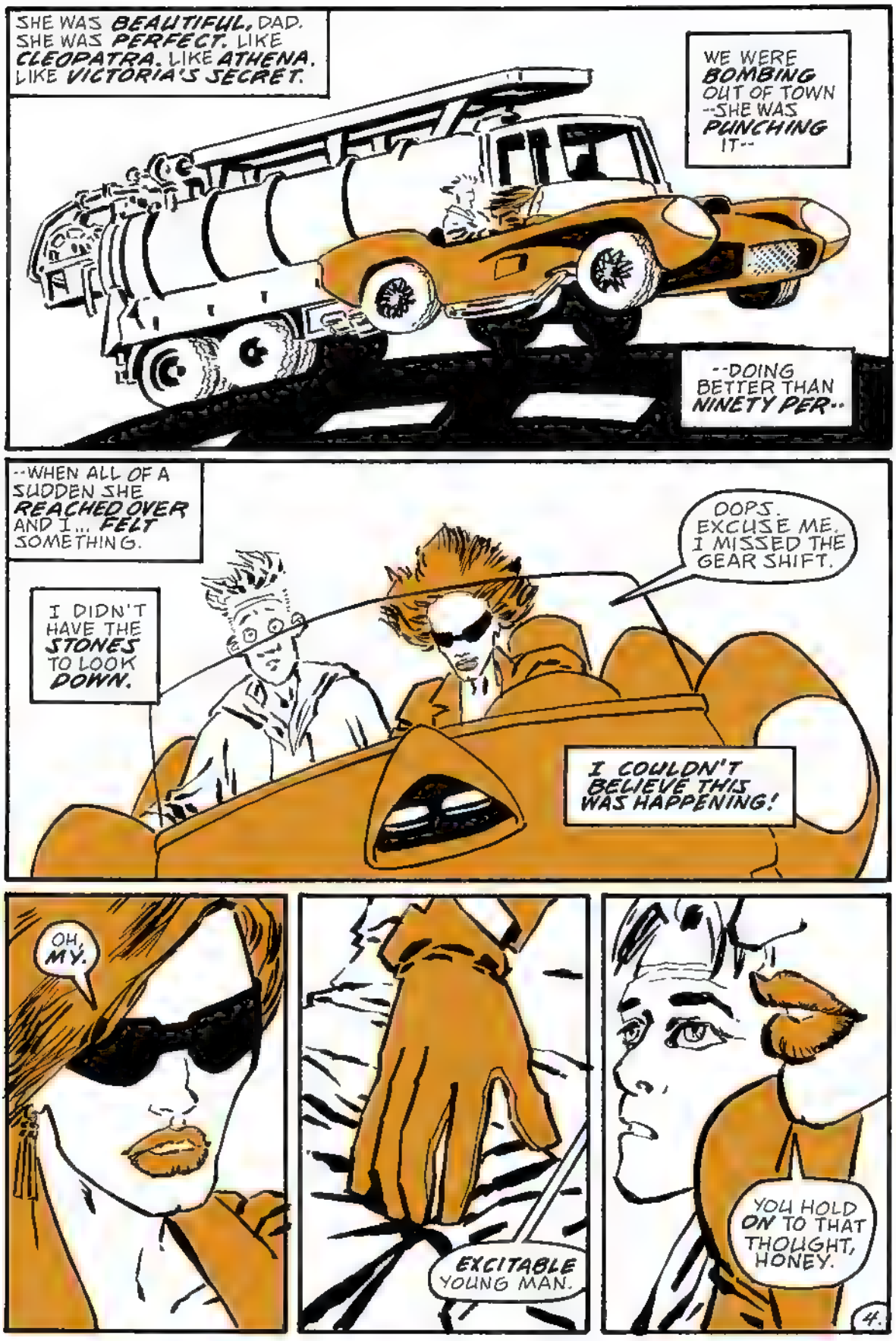
...AND YOU'RE REALLY FUN TO TALK WITH AND EVERYTHING...
THEN CAME THE WORDS THAT EVERY MAN DREADS ...
...BUT CAN'T WE JUST STAY FRIENDS?
SURE. NO SWEAT. JUST AN IDEA.

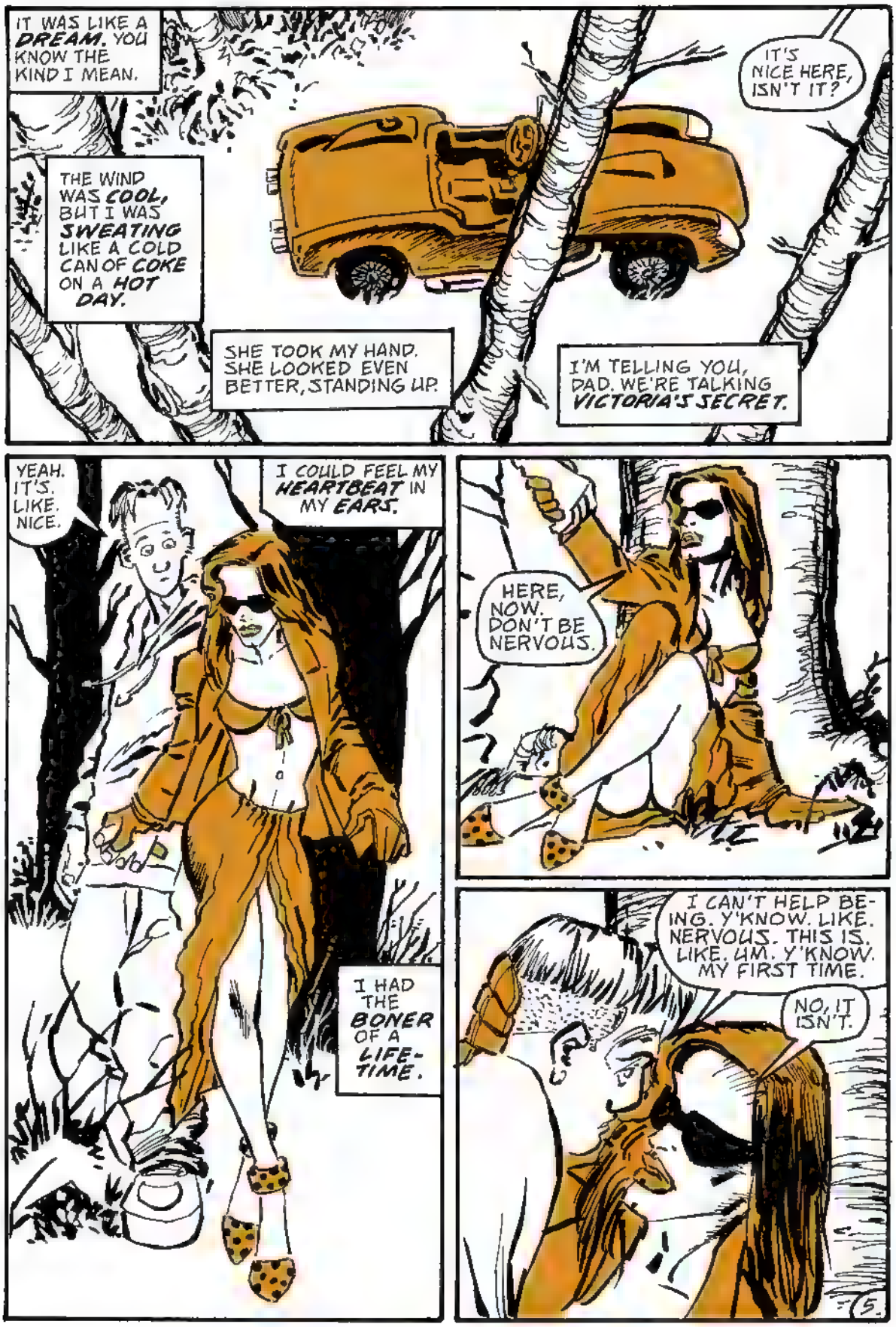
SEE YOU IN CLASS...
SURE SEE YA.
JUST LIKE THAT, IT WAS OVER.
I NEVER HAD A CHANCE.

BOOM
I FACED MY DESTINY. I KNEW, AT LAST, WHAT I WAS.
MY SOUL SWIRLED DOWN THE PIPE LIKE WATER FROM A TOILET GETTING FLUSHED.

THE WORD STUCK TO ME LIKE WET JOCKEY SHORTS:
LOSER
2.


THEN I HEARD IT.
VROOM
WHOA. BITCHIN' FERRARI!
YAA!
SCREECH
HER VOICE WAS HUSKY, LIKE THAT ACTRESS IN THOSE OLD MOVIES YOU WATCH WHEN MOM'S ASLEEP...
CARE FOR A RIDE?
YES, YOU. HOP IN.
9.


SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL, DAD. SHE WAS PERFECT. LIKE CLEOPATRA. LIKE ATHENA. LIKE VICTORIA'S SECRET.
WE WERE BOMBING OUT OF TOWN --SHE WAS PUNCHING IT--
--DOING BETTER THAN NINETY PER--
--WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN SHE REACHED OVER AND I... FELT SOMETHING.
I DIDN'T HAVE THE STONES TO LOOK DOWN.
OOPS. EXCUSE ME. I MISSED THE GEAR SHIFT.
I COULDN'T BELIEVE THIS WAS HAPPENING!
OH, MY.
EXCITABLE YOUNG MAN.
YOU HOLD ON TO THAT THOUGHT, HONEY.
4.


IT WAS LIKE A DREAM. YOU KNOW THE KIND I MEAN.
THE WIND WAS COOL, BUT I WAS SWEATING LIKE A COLD CAN OF COKE ON A HOT DAY.
SHE TOOK MY HAND. SHE LOOKED EVEN BETTER, STANDING UP.
IT'S NICE HERE, ISN'T IT?
I'M TELLING YOU, DAD. WE'RE TALKING VICTORIA'S SECRET.
YEAH. IT'S. LIKE. NICE.
I COULD FEEL MY HEARTBEAT IN MY EARS.
I HAD THE BONER OF A LIFE-TIME.
HERE, NOW. DON'T BE NERVOUS.
I CAN'T HELP BE-ING. Y'KNOW. LIKE. NERVOUS. THIS IS. LIKE, UM. Y'KNOW. MY FIRST TIME.
NO, IT ISN'T.

NO, I. LIKE. I'M ONLY. LIKE. FIFTEEN. THIS IS. Y'KNOW. THIS'LL BE MY. MY. UH. FIRST TIME.
NO, HONEY.
IT WON'T.
KRUNCH
IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO BREAK YOUR SCRAWNY NECK. JUST A TWIST OF MY WRIST.
BUT ORDERS ARE ORDERS.
AWK
AAK
GAAA!
SNAP
WHY? WHY?
WHO CARES?
IT WAS HORRIBLE!
I DIDN'T EVEN GET TO COP A FEEL!
SNAP
THE END

SHE WASN'T KIDDING ABOUT BEING STRONG ENOUGH TO BREAK MY NECK, EITHER.
SHE COULD'VE KILLED ME EASY.
BUT SHE DIDN'T, SON. THAT'S WHAT COUNTS.
THE DOC SAYS THERE'S NOTHING BROKEN IN YOU THAT WON'T HEAL UP JUST FINE.
GET YOUR REST, NOW.

AND DON'T BE SO ROUGH ON YOURSELF YOU JUST DID WHAT ANY FELLA YOUR AGE WOULD'VE DONE. IT'S THE TESTOSTERONE, BOY. WE'RE HARD-WIRED, US GUYS ARE.
I GOTTA GET BACK TO WORK. YOUR MOM WILL BE ALONG SOON--AND YOU'RE GONNA TELL HER WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU.
AW, DAD...
DON'T ARGUE WITH ME, JOSH. WE GOT NO SECRETS IN THIS FAMILY.
OKAY, DAD.
THAT'S A GOOD BOY.

DON'T LET THIS PUT YOU OFF GIRLS, HEAR?
OH, JESUS. OH, JESUS. GOLDA'S GONNA BE SICK OVER THIS.
KLIK
"NO SECRETS"? PLEASE, DETECTIVE. YOU'RE A MAN OF MANY SECRETS.
WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU TO KEEP THEM.
YOU.
IT WAS YOU.

YOU SON OF A BITCH. YOU COST ME FOUR OF MY MEN AND GOT INTERNAL AFFAIRS ALL OVER MY ASS-- AND NOW THIS.
I'LL RIP YOUR DAMN FACE OFF!
COMPOSE YOURSELF. COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS. YOUR SON IS STILL ALIVE.
THIS WAS ONLY A FRIENDLY WARNING. THE STAKES IN OUR LITTLE GAME HAVE RISEN. WE CAN'T HAVE YOU GOING ALL WOBBLY ON US
I'LL KILL YOU, YOU SON OF A--
HURKK
NICE TIE. A GIFT FROM YOUR WIFE?
SNIP
NEVER FORGET, MY FRIEND--
--WHATEVER PRESSURE YOU'RE FINDING YOURSELF UNDER--
--WE ARE EVERYWHERE. WE SEE EVERYTHING.
AND YOU'VE GOT A WIFE AND KIDS TO THINK ABOUT.

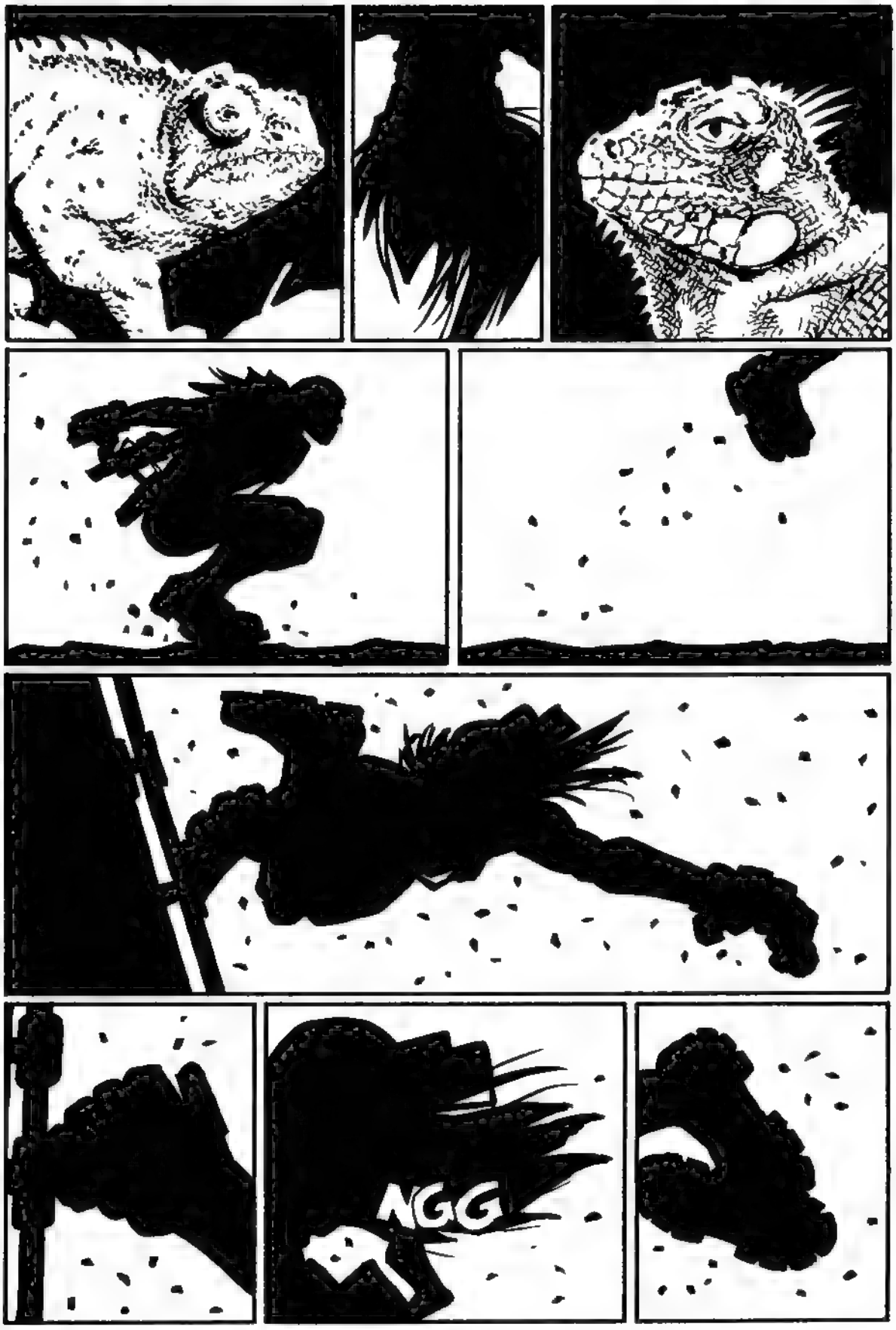
MY STOMACH FINALLY SETTLES DOWN.
I'M EVEN ABLE TO EAT THE STEAK AND EGGS THAT JERRY FIXES FOR ME.
I STEAL A FEW MORE PRECIOUS MINUTES TO WASH AWAY THE SWEAT AND GRIME AND BLOOD.
TONK
DAMN IT. STILL SHAKY. HANDS STILL SHAKY.

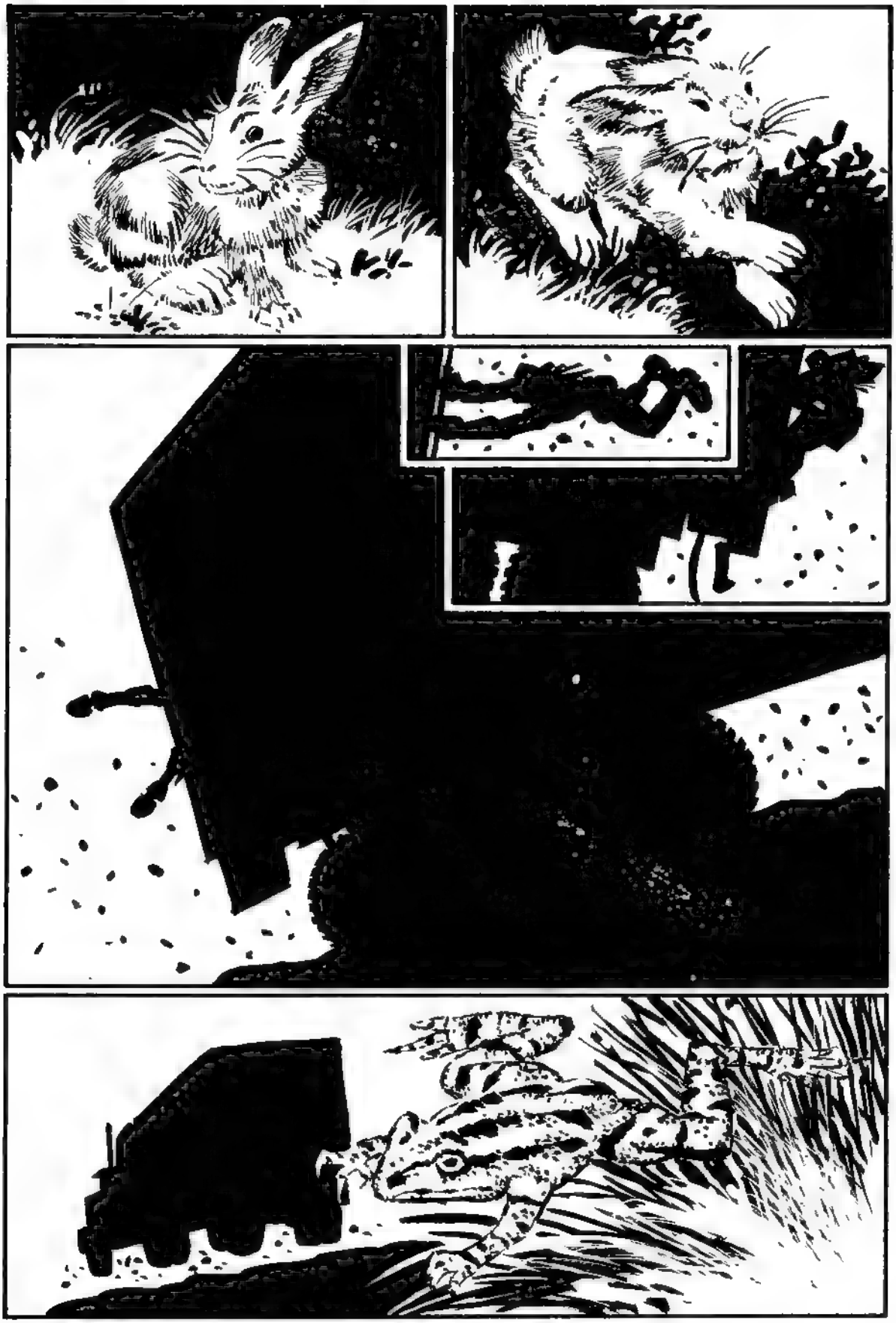
NO. THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH.
THERE'S NO MORE TIME TO WASTE.
GET PAST IT.
ESTHER NEEDS YOU.
I'D LOVE TO ENLIST JERRY IN THE MISSION --BUT QUIET ISN'T HIS SPECIALTY.
AND UNTIL I KNOW WHAT I'M UP AGAINST, I'LL HAVE TO PLAY IT VERY, VERY QUIET.
THE MAN HAS FASHION SENSE!
THANKS, JERRY.

ESTHER.
I'M ON MY WAY.

HUH?
WHUZZAT?
I SAID WAKE UP. YOU'VE MISSED A LOT.
YOU SON OF A BITCH. BARGING IN. RIGHT INNA MY OWN HOME.

RIGHT INNA MY OWN HOME. SON OF A BITCH.
WUH? ...
FORGET IT, COP.
YOU WERE PASSED OUT COLD. I HAD ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD TO EMPTY YOUR GUN.
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT?
I'LL GET TO THAT.
SIT STILL, WILL YOU? YOU'RE MAKING ME DIZZY.
SURE. I'LL SIT STILL. AND SO WILL YOU. AND YOU'LL LISTEN.
AS YOU MIGHT RECALL, I'M LOOKING FOR A WOMAN NAMED ESTHER. SHE WAS KIDNAPPED BY SOME VERY UNPLEASANT PEOPLE. I GOT A LEAD TO AN OLD FACTORY COMPLEX NORTH OF TOWN.
I PARKED A FEW MILES FROM IT. I FIGURED I'D HAVE TO MAKE IT THE REST OF THE WAY ON FOOT.
THEN I HEARD AN ENGINE ROAR GOING MY WAY
I HITCHED A RIDE.

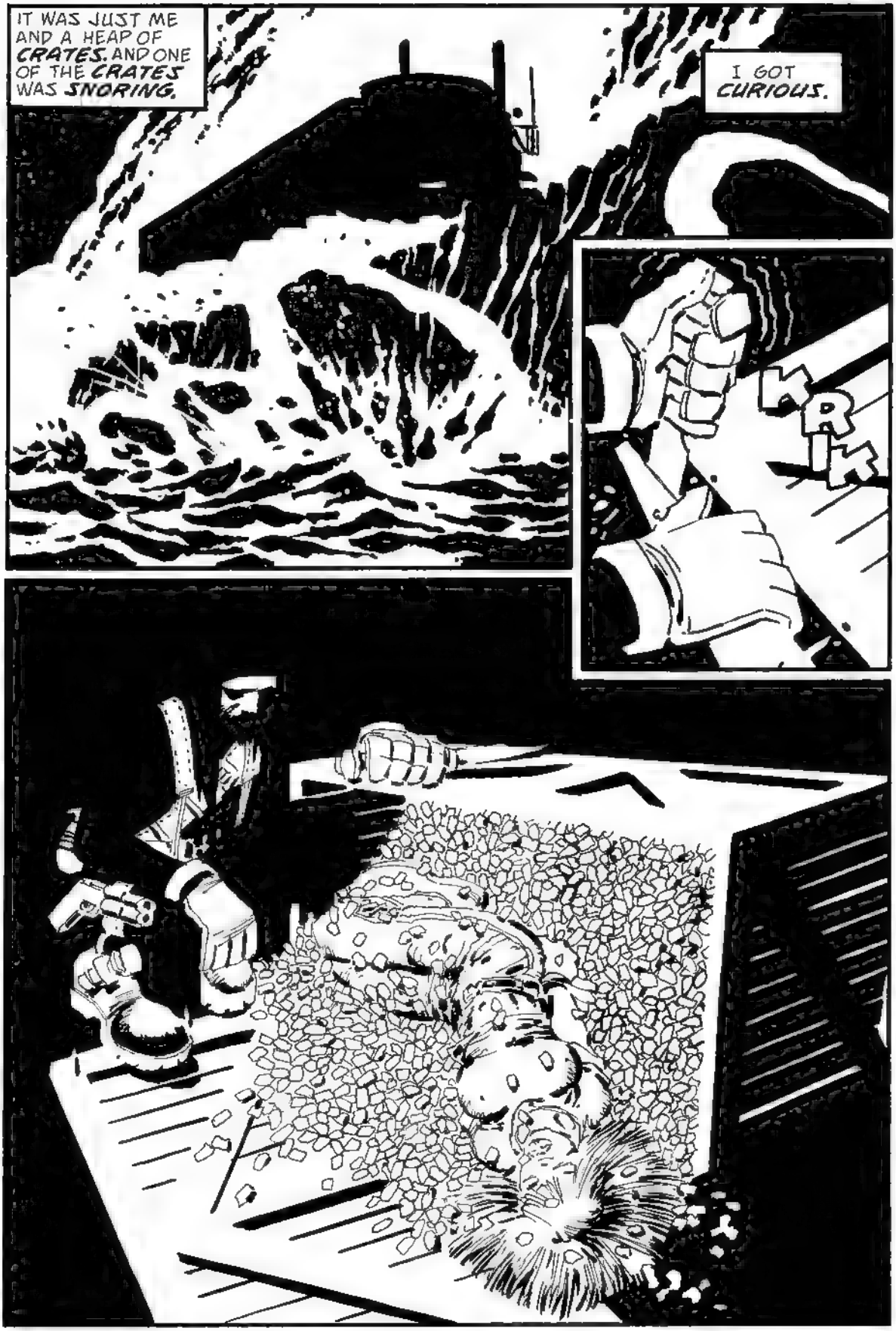

NGG



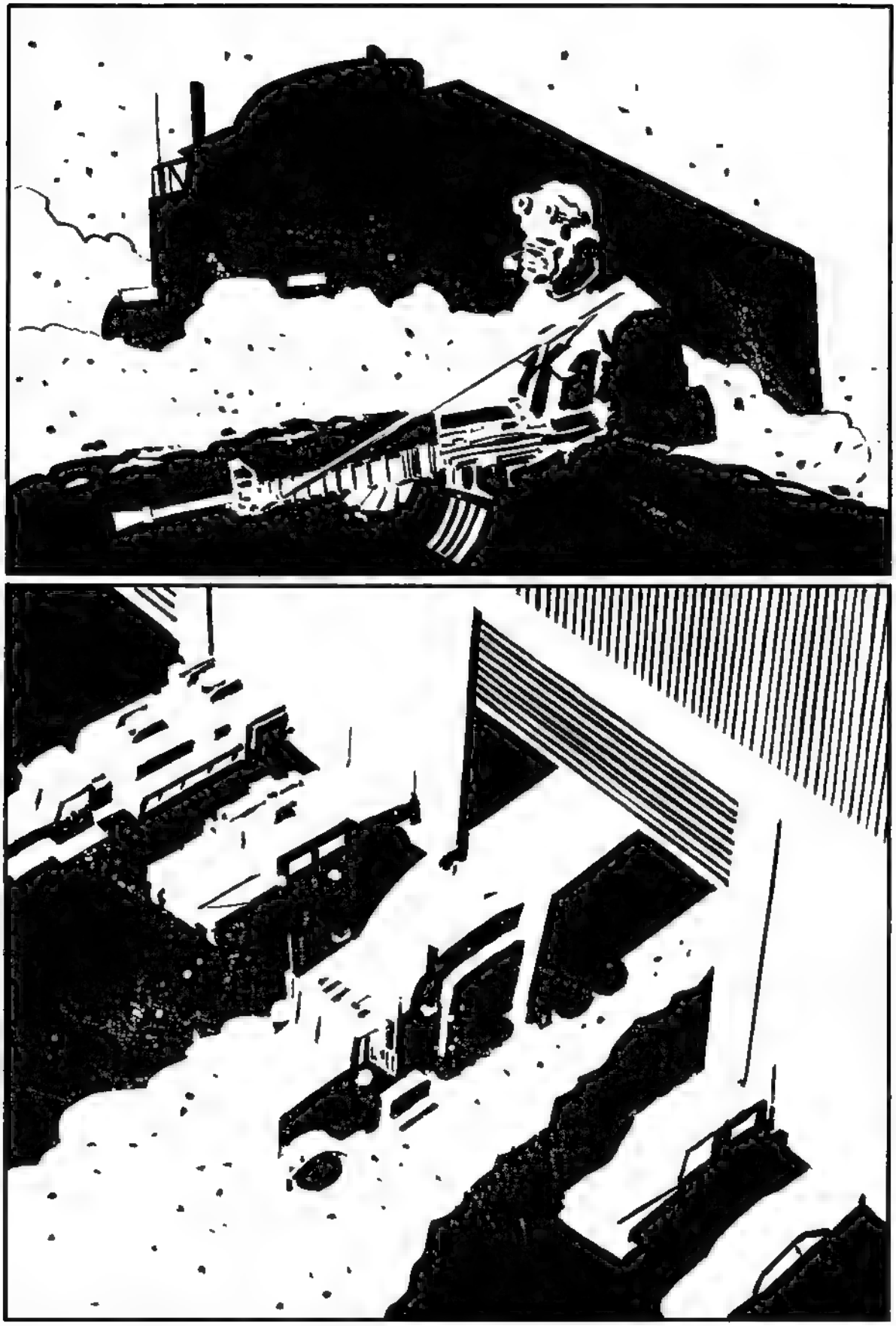
I TOOK A MOMENT TO CATCH MY BREATH.
I SAT ON A CRATE.
IT SNORED.

OHO! IT SNORED, DID IT? AND WHAT WAS INSIDE IT? MAYBE A COUPLE DOZEN PINK ELEPHANTS TAKING A SNOOZE?
QUIET. SOMEONE'S COMING.
CLIMAX
OH--HI, DAD! YOU'RE UP LATE! MOM TOLD YOU I CALLED, DIDN'T SHE?
SURE SHE DID, HANNAH. DID YOU HAVE A GOOD TIME?
IT WAS GREAT! I WENT TO THE HOSPITAL TO SAY HI TO JOSH AND I RAN INTO JENNA AND BURTON AND SAM!
AND WE WENT AND SAW THE NEW JANE AUSTEN AND IT WAS GREAT!
SMEH
THAT'S NICE, SWEETIE. OFF TO BED WITH YOU NOW.
SLEEP TIGHT, PRECIOUS

NOT ONE WORD.
JUST STATE YOUR BUSINESS AND GET THE HELL OUT OF MY LIFE.
I WAS IN THE BACK OF A TRUCK. MOVING FAST.


IT WAS JUST ME AND A HEAP OF CRATES. AND ONE OF THE CRATES WAS SNORING.
I GOT CURIOUS.
NRK

STILL SNORING. STILL BREATHING.
ALIVE.
JUST ME AND THE CRATES.
JUST ME AND THE CRATES.
I TOUCHED ONE OF THE SMALLER CRATES.
A TINY COUGH.
A GENTLE KICK.
THE TRUCK LURCHED, GEARS GRINDING, DOWNSHIFTING.
I GOT READY TO KILL SOME PEOPLE.



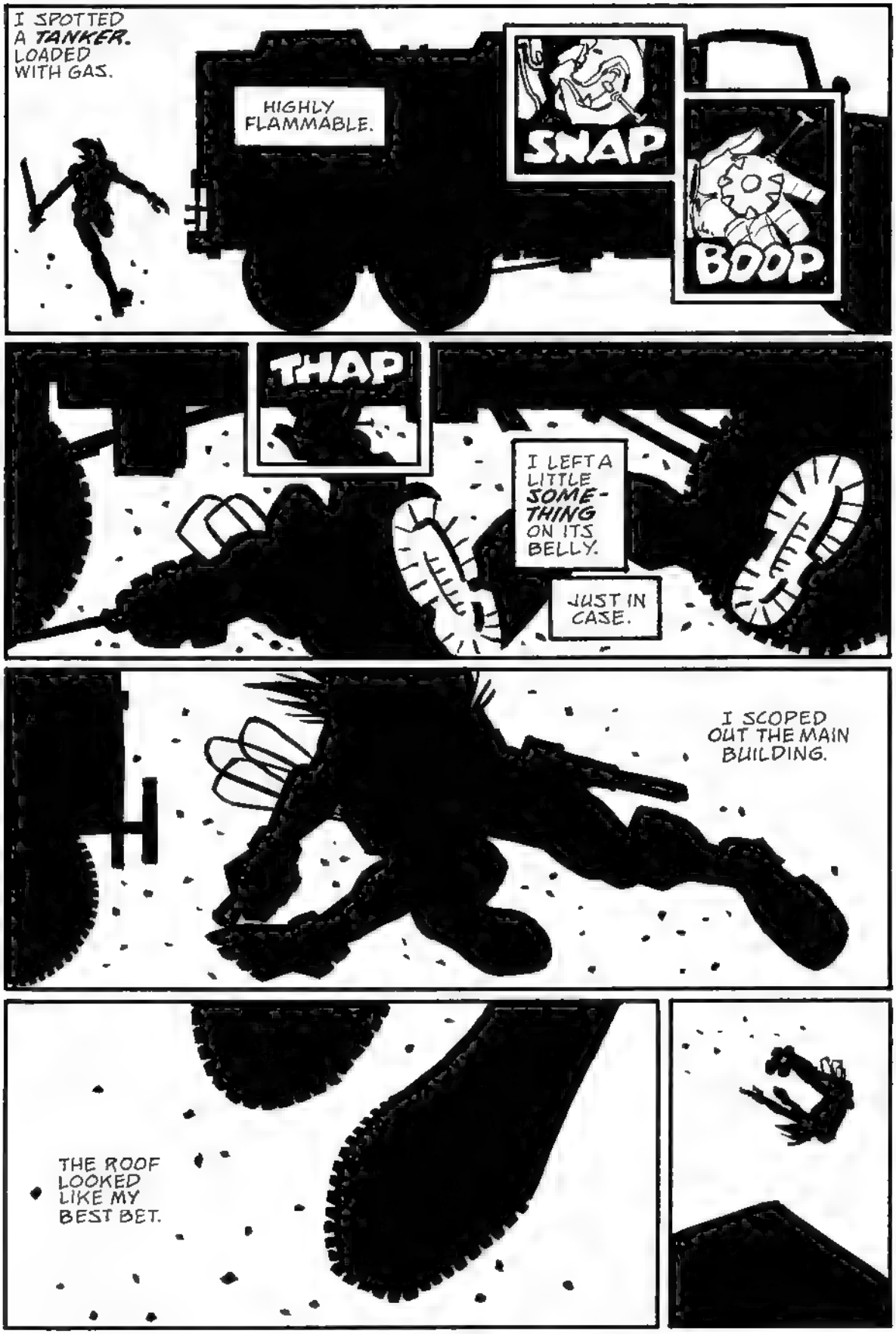
LIKE I SAID.
YOU MISSED A LOT.
FUPP
HUH
GOLLY
HELL
SPLUKK

FUPP
KUSH
SPLAKK
FUPP

SPUKK
THUKK
FUP
FUP
FUP
SHINGG

I FOUND A SIDE EXIT.
RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA
RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA
KRNCH

CHAK CHAK
I MADE MY WAY ACROSS THE YARD.


I SPOTTED A TANKER. LOADED WITH GAS.
HIGHLY FLAMMABLE.
SNAP
BOOP
THAP
I LEFT A LITTLE SOME-THING ON ITS BELLY.
JUST IN CASE.
I SCOPED OUT THE MAIN BUILDING.
THE ROOF LOOKED LIKE MY BEST BET.

THERE WAS ONE GUARD.
HE WAS PRETTY QUICK.
HE ALMOST GOT A SHOT OFF.

I GOTTA HAND IT TO YOU, KID. YOU KNOW EXACTLY HOW TO TALK TO A COP.
SO FAR, WE'VE GOT YOU DOWN FOR TRESPASSING, BREAKING AND ENTERING, MULTIPLE ASSAULTS WITH DEADLY WEAPONS--
--AND I GOT ME A LITTLE HUNCH THAT BERETTA OF YOURS ISN'T REGISTERED--
--THROW IN A HEAPIN' HELPIN' OF MURDERS AND YOU'VE REALLY GOT ME GOING!
DON'T STOP NOW. WHAT WAS NEXT? YOU RUN INTO SCULLY AND MULDER?
NO. A NURSE--
--AND A NURSERY.

BABIES. BOTH SEXES.
MOST OF THEM CAUCASIAN.
ALL OF THEM ALIVE.
102
103
104
105
106
HUSH, NOW. EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE JUST FINE ...
A CORRIDOR. ANOTHER GUARD
PEOPLE IN CAGES.

PEOPLE IN CAGES.
MOSTLY FEMALE.
MOSTLY YOUNG.
MOSTLY CAUCASIAN.
PEOPLE IN CAGES.
DRUGGED. INSENSATE.
PEOPLE IN CAGES
LOTS OF THEM.

NO SIGN OF ESTHER.
A FEW MORE CORRIDORS. A STAIRWELL. SIX MORE GUARDS.
AN OPERATING ROOM. A MORGUE.
URPP.
YOU'RE LOSING ME. I'M NOT BIG ON HAIKU.
HOW ABOUT YOU THROW IN A VERB OR TWO, HUH?
I'LL GIVE YOU VERBS. HERE'S ONE:
STOP.
STOP WHAT? I DON'T GET YOU.

STOP BEING STUPID.
I'M STILL NOT GETTING YOU...
DON'T THROW YOUR LIFE AWAY. PUT THE GUN BACK IN THE DRAWER.
THP
THP
THP
THP
ULP!
OKAY. ALL RIGHT. NO MORE TRICKS. YOU WIN. FINISH YOUR DAMN CRAZY STORY.

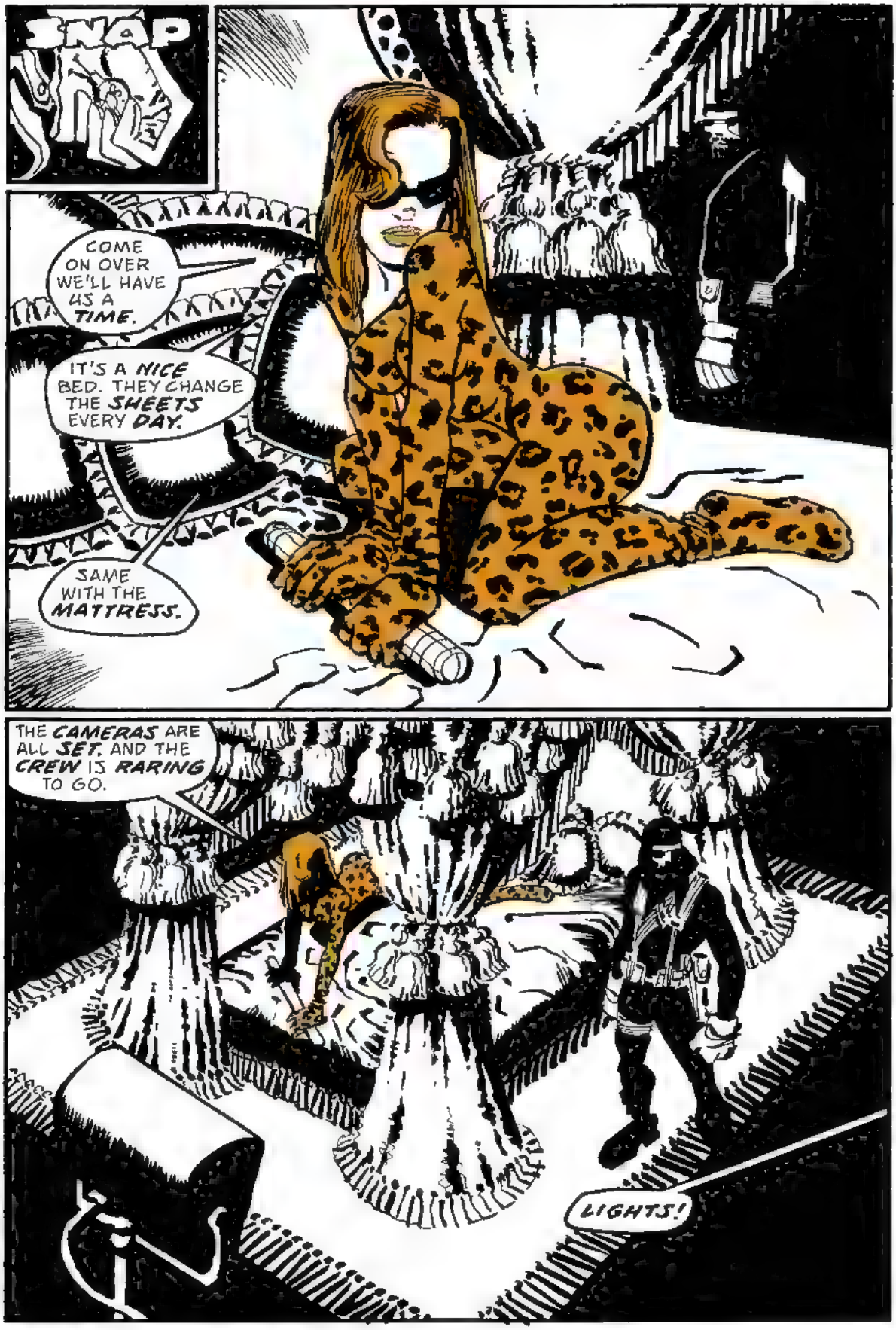
I HEADED FOR THE CENTER OF THE COMPLEX. I MET SOME RESISTANCE.
SOMETIME AROUND THEN, SOMEBODY IN CHARGE MUST HAVE PICKED ME UP ON A SURVEILLANCE CAMERA.
CONSIDERING WHAT CAME LATER.
RUTHLESS.
ABSOLUTELY RUTHLESS.

I BROKE INTO A COLD PLACE. A MORGUE.
THE FIRST DRAWER I OPENED WAS EMPTY.
THE SECOND ONE HAD A MAN IN IT, MAYBE TWENTY YEARS OLD. HE WAS IN PRETTY GOOD SHAPE--
--EXCEPT THAT HIS HEART AND LUNGS AND LIVER HAD BEEN SURGICALLY REMOVED.
WHADDAYAMEAN, "SURGICALLY REMOVED"?
JUST THAT. SURGICALLY REMOVED. HARVESTED.
THERE'S QUITE A MARKET OUT THERE FOR LIVE ORGANS.
AND FOR YOUNG WOMEN. AND FOR YOUNG BOYS.
AND FOR BABIES.

AW, CHRIST! WHAT A LOAD OF CRAP!
GLUG
YOU'RE FULL OF SHIT.
BABIES? SO MOM WANTS A KID AND DAD'S SHOOTING BLANKS. SO THEY ADOPT.
SNATCH? HAUL YOUR WALLET TO OLD TOWN. NAME YOUR THRILL. YOU GOT IT. VISA AND MASTERCARD WELCOMED!
LIVE ORGANS? CALL YOUR GOD DAMN DOCTOR!
MAYBE IT'S MORE OF A SELLER'S MARKET THAN YOU THINK IT IS.
WHY ELSE WOULD THEY BE PAYING YOU OFF, COP?
YOU GO TO HELL.
THAT'S WHERE I'VE JUST BEEN.
HELL.
THE HEART OF DARKNESS.

HELL.
THE HEART OF DARKNESS.

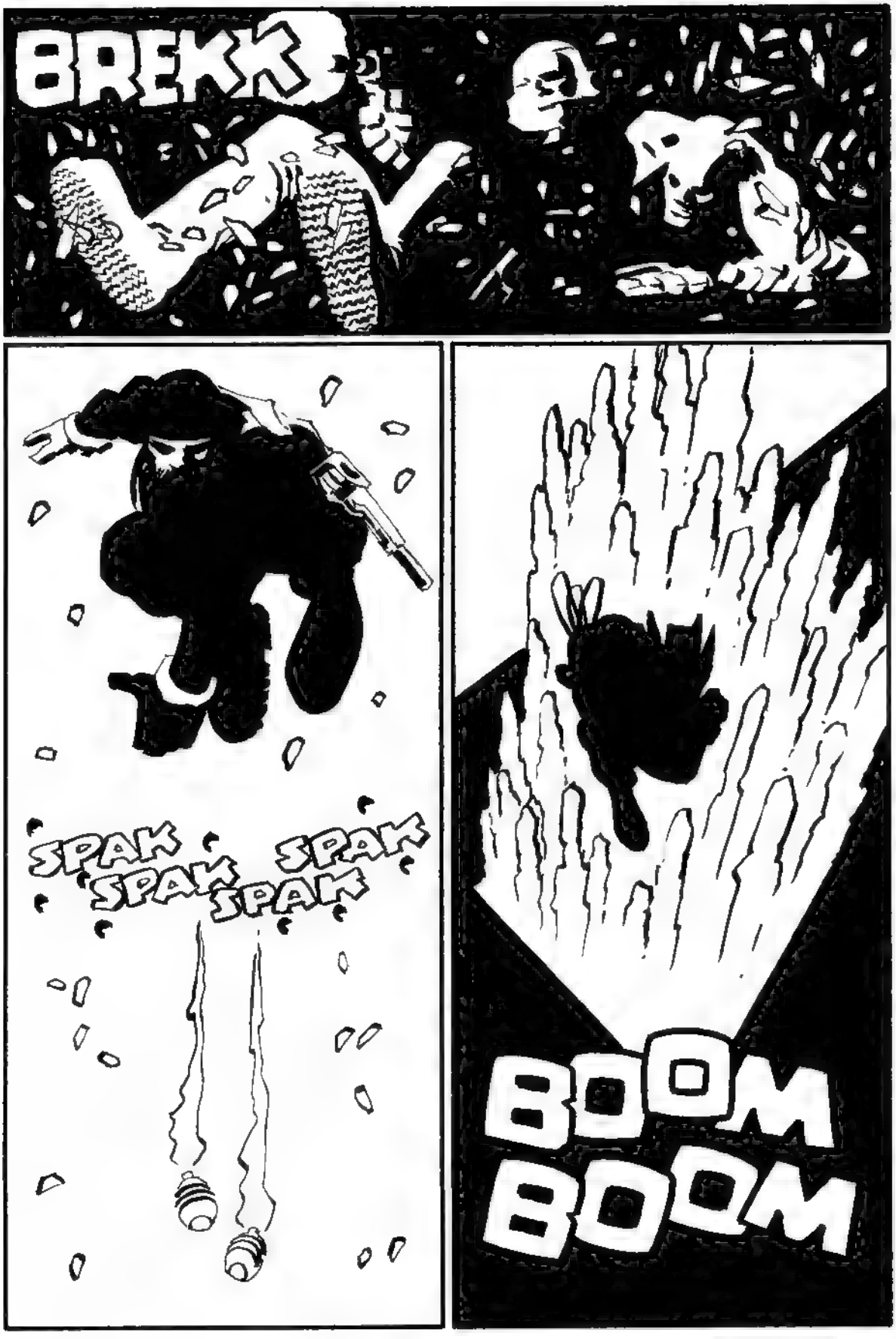
HELL--ALL DECKED OUT LIKE A MOVIE SET.
CHLORINE BURNED MY NOSTRILS.
THEY KEPT THE PLACE CLEAN.
SPOTLESS.
THE PROPS TOLD ME WHAT THEY FILMED.
THE PROPS-- AND THE COSTUMES.
CARE TO MAKE A MOVIE WITH ME, HANDSOME?


SNAP
COME ON OVER WE'LL HAVE US A TIME.
IT'S A NICE BED. THEY CHANGE THE SHEETS EVERY DAY.
SAME WITH THE MATTRESS.
THE CAMERAS ARE ALL SET, AND THE CREW IS RARING TO GO.
LIGHTS!

PLEASE, WALLACE -
--DON'T FORCE ME TO SAY "ACTION."

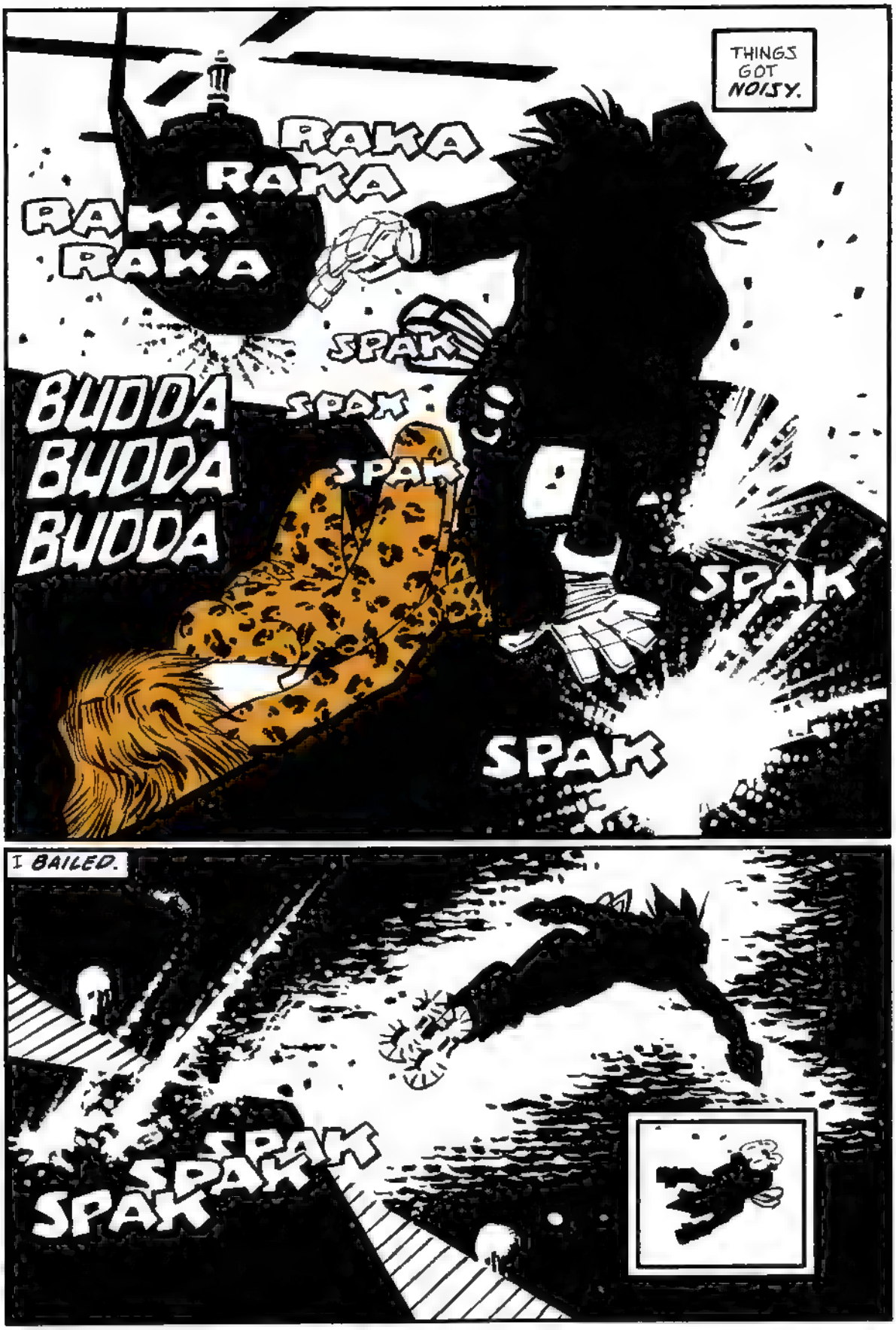
WHERE IS SHE? WHERE'S ESTHER?
WHO CARES? SHE'S NOBODY. NO FAMILY, NO FRIENDS, NO CAREER TO SPEAK OF A WASTE OF HUMAN RESOURCES.
SHE HAS A FRIEND. WHERE IS SHE?
SHE'S GOING TO A FARAWAY LAND TO BECOME THE BRIDE OF A VERY RICH MAN.
THE HELL SHE WILL.
AND, AFTER A PERIOD OF CONDITIONING, YOU'RE GOING TO WORK FOR ME.
THE HELL I WILL.
BOOP
BOOP
MY LITTLE SOMETHING.
BOOM

PLASTIQUE DETONATED AT A LARGE STORE OF FUEL.
THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING.
BOOM
KRASHH
OOF!
DAMN YOUR EYES!
I'LL KILL YOU GOOD!


BREKK
SPAK SPAK SPAK
SPAK SPAK
BOOM
BOOM

TASHH
SHNG
SHNG
THIS IS GONNA HURT!

YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT.
FAPP
WHUD
RAKKAKKA
RAKKA
RA


THINGS GOT NOISY.
RAKA
RAKA
RAKA
RAKA
SPAK
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK
I BAILED.
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK

I BARELY MADE IT OUT OF THERE WITH MY SKIN INTACT.
I DIDN'T SAVE ESTHER.
I DIDN'T SAVE ANYBODY.
I DIDN'T ACCOMPLISH A DAMN THING.

RINGG!
OH, CHRIST IT'S THEM. THEY KNOW YOU'RE HERE.
YEAH?
...
I LISTEN. I WAIT.
IT ONLY FEELS LIKE A YEAR.
YOU ACCOMPLISHED MORE THAN YOU THOUGHT YOU DID, HOTSHOT.
THEY WANT TO CUT A DEAL.
TAKE WHAT YOU CAN GET, KID IT'S HER LIFE.
I'M LISTENING.

THEY WANT TO CUT A DEAL, ALL RIGHT.
A ROTTEN DEAL. A DEVIL'S BARGAIN.
I GET ESTHER. THEY GET TO KEEP THEIR HELLISH OPERATION GOING.
UNEXPOSED. UNIMPEDED.
KAK
KAKK
KLAK
KAKK
A ROTTEN DEAL. A DEVIL'S BARGAIN.
I TAKE IT
THE PICKUP IS SET AT AN OLD FARM AT NORTH CROSS AND LENNOX.

SPOOKY PLACE. BAD THINGS HAVE HAPPENED HERE.
THE MAN SAID I'D FIND HER IN THE BARN

HI

W
WALLACE. YOU'RE WALLACE.
AND I'M ESTHER.
ESTHER. MY NAME IS ESTHER. THAT'S MY NAME. ESTHER.

I BROUGHT YOU A COAT, ESTHER.
THAT'S MY NAME. ESTHER.
THEY'RE GOING TO CUT MY FACE.
NO. NOBODY'S GOING TO CUT YOU. NOBODY'S GOING TO HURT YOU. YOU'RE SAFE WITH ME.
THE COAT'S HEAVY. IT'S REALLY HEAVY.
I KNOW. I'LL HELP YOU WALK COME ALONG.
THE COAT'S REALLY HEAVY.
I KNOW. YOU'RE DOING FINE. JUST KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN.
YOU'RE DOING FINE. JUST KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN.

RAKKA
RAKKA
RAKKA
RAKKA
RAKKA
YAA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
RAKKA
RAKKA
RAKKA
RAKKA

POOM
EVERYTHING OKAY DOWN THERE, COMMANDER?
WE'RE FINE, JERRY. NICE SHOOTING.
WH-- WHY AREN'T WE DEAD?
LOVELY STUFF, KEVLAR
YOU'RE SAFE WITH ME.

SHE SHOULD BE ALL RIGHT IN A FEW DAYS. WHO-EVER DOPED HER UP KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING IT'S PROFESSIONAL WORK.
TELL YOUR BUDDY THERE'S NO SMOKING IN HERE.
YES, DOCTOR. THANK YOU.
THERE'S NO SMOKING IN HERE.
JERRY--I'M AFRAID WE'VE GOT ONE MORE MISSION TO RUN. IT'LL BE THE TWO OF US--UP AGAINST HUNDREDS.
I CAN'T LEAVE ALL THOSE PEOPLE CAPTIVE.
AND WE SURE CAN'T COUNT ON THE COPS.
I'M READY, SIR LET'S GO RAISE SOME HOLY HELL.
COMIN' THROUGH!
WE GOT DOZENS!

MASSIVE POLICE OPERATION
HEY! NO SMOKING IN HERE!
EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT
AN OLD FACTORY COMPLEX NORTH OF TOWN
DOZENS WOUNDED
PEOPLE IN CAGES
PEOPLE IN CAGES
LIEBOWITZ
LIEBOWITZ, YOU BLOODY FOOL.
YOU'RE MAKING A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO MADE THE MISTAKE, COLONEL.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE THREATENED MY FAMILY.

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BEAT UP MY BOY.
BLAM
OUR HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION IS A SHAMBLES, HERR WALLENQUIST.
GIVE THE WORD --AND THE COP AND THE SOLDIER WILL DIE.
NO.
NO REVENGE.
MAKE A MISSING PERSON OUTTA THE FUCKER.
YES, SIR CONSIDER IT DONE.

BUT, SIR-- WE CAN'T LET THIS STAND!
WE CAN AND WE WILL. REVENGE IS A LOSER'S GAME. THERE'S NO PERCENTAGE IN IT. ALL THAT MATTERS IS PROFIT --AND POWER.
LIEBOWITZ WILL RECOVER FROM HIS PANG OF CONSCIENCE SOON ENOUGH. HE'LL BE OF FURTHER USE TO US.
AS FOR WALLACE-- LET THE MAN BE ON HIS WAY-- AND PRAY WE NEVER SEE HIS LIKE AGAIN.
WEEKS PASS.
JUST A SECOND!
I'LL BE JUST A SECOND!
NO HURRY ...
SHE'S HERSELF AGAIN.
I'M ALL SET, "COMMANDER." THANKS FOR WAITING.
THAT'S OKAY.
WE'VE GOT ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.
I FINALLY ASK.
ESTHER --WHY DID YOU JUMP?
SHE DOESN'T ANSWER FOR THE LONGEST DAMN TIME. THEN, HER VOICE LOW=

I WAS LONELY.
THAT ROTTEN TOWN. THOSE IT CAN'T CORRUPT, IT SOILS.
THOSE IT CAN'T SOIL, IT KILLS.
THAT ROTTEN TOWN MILES BEHIND US NOW. FADING INTO MEMORY.
A BRIGHT DAY DAWNS.
WE TALK ABOUT ALL SORTS OF THINGS.
THE END

COVER GALLERY

Color By Lynn Varley

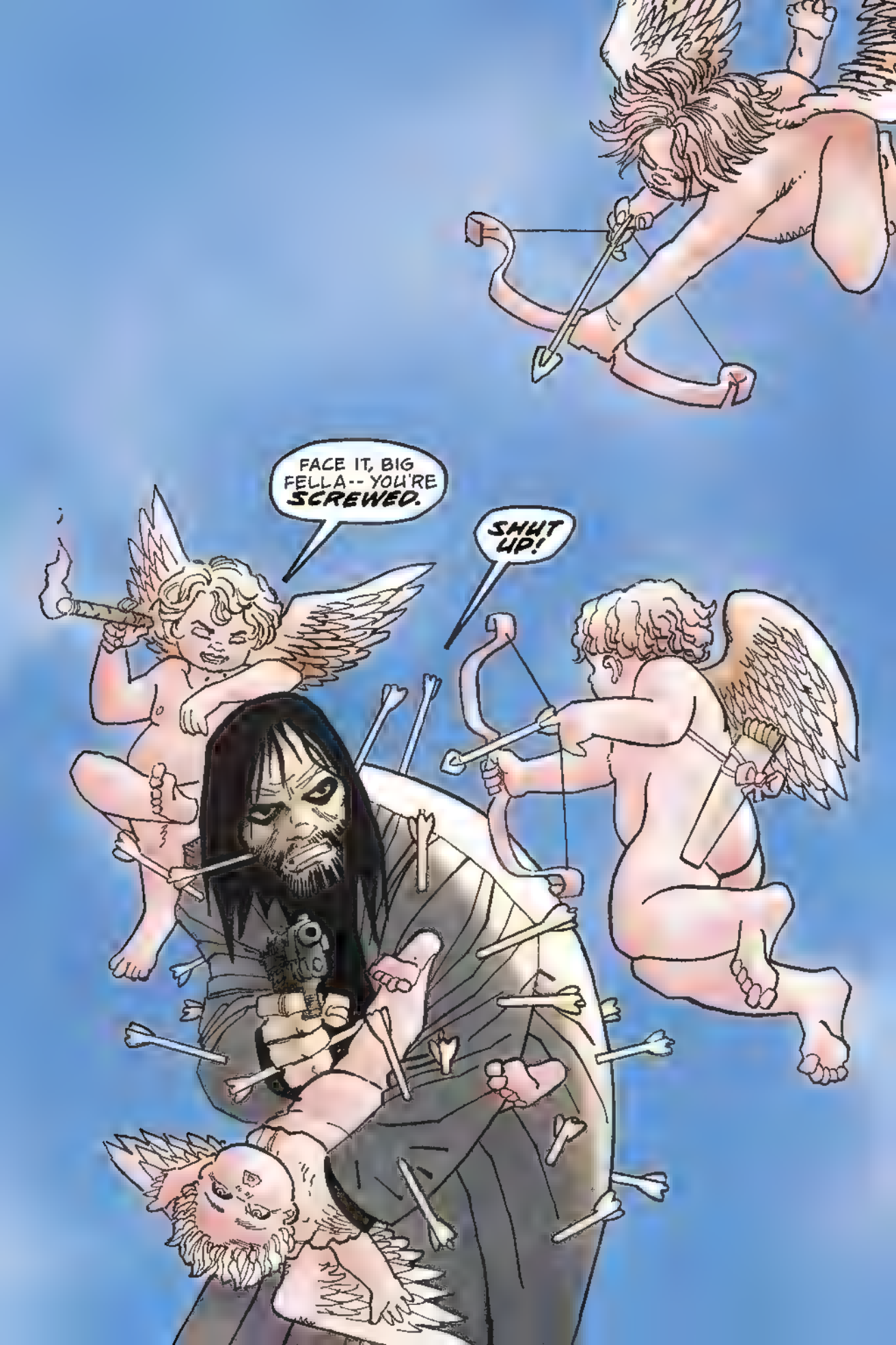
DON'T WORRY. I'M A QUALIFIED PHYSICIAN.

OOOH! I DO BELIEVE THE MAN IS LOOKING TO DO THE RODNEY!

BUT, MA'AM-- I BARELY KNOW YOU.

STOP THAT, MA'AM. THIS ISN'T THE TIME.
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK
SURE IT IS.

DO EXACTLY WHAT I TELL YOU TO DO. OBEY MY EVERY WORD.
YES, SIR.


FACE IT, BIG FELLA-- YOU'RE SCREWED.
SHUT UP!

PLEASE. HAVE MERCY.
THIS IS MERCY.

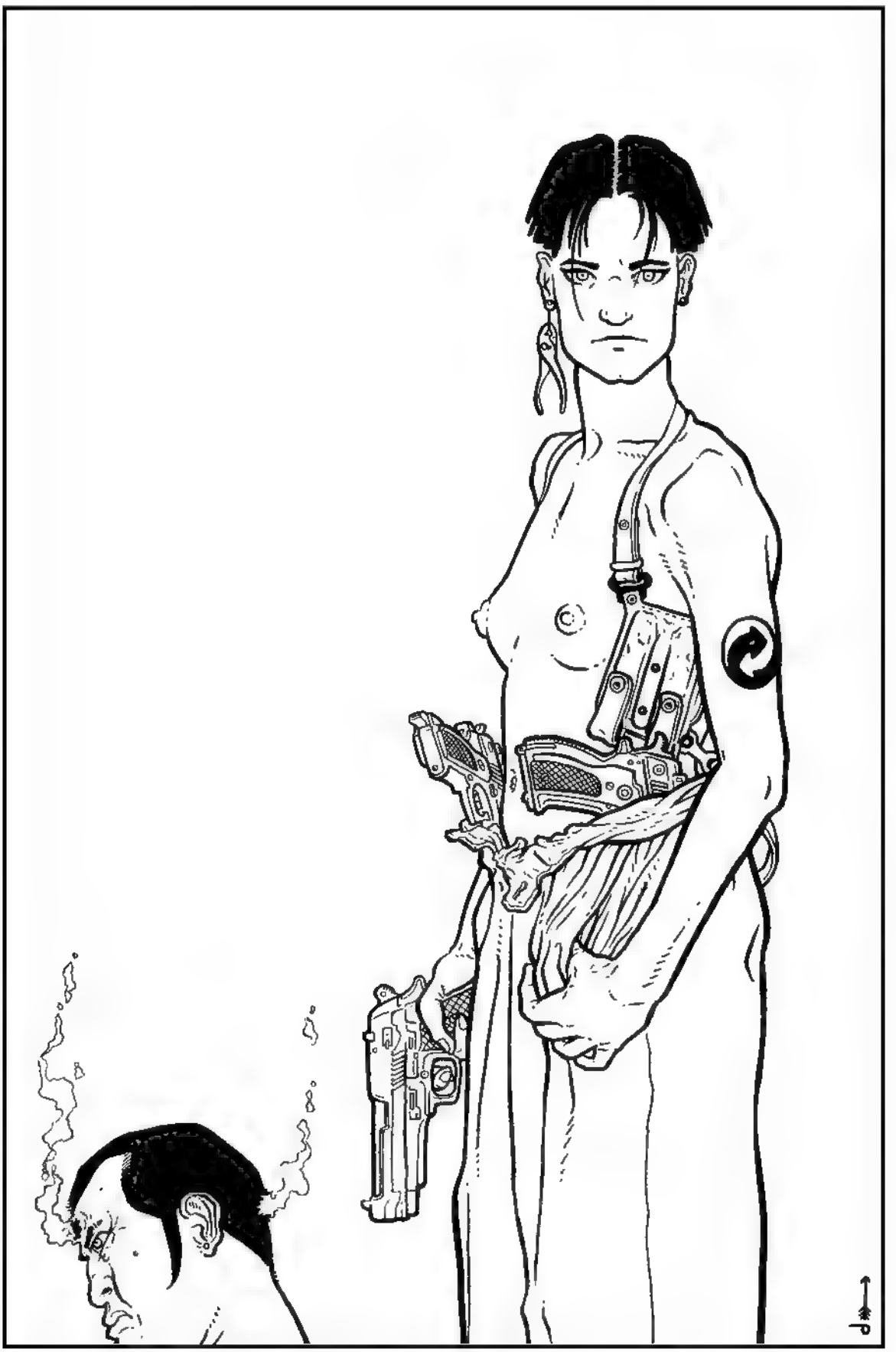
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
JUST WORKING MY WAY UP THE FOOD CHAIN, MA'AM. STAND ASIDE.

PINUP GALLERY

Eduardo Barreto
Brian Bolland
Geof Darrow
Gary Gianni
Paul Grist
R. C. Harvey
Russ Heath
Gil Kane
Jason Pearson
Lynn Varley
Matt Wagner

EDUARDO
BARRETO

ROLLAND



"It's just like they told me. Polly's good with the pliers."

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She don't look much in dis dress to me --
--but dat sure ain't no sin!
HARVEY

ROCKWELL

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